Little Folks

The Story of the Nursery Frieze

Bobby went to a beautiful party, where he saw a conjurer and Mr. Punch, who made him laugh. He laughed so much that he forgot how many raspberry ices, jellies and chocolate cakes he had eaten. Really, he had eaten far too many.

He hurried home to bed and went right off to sleep. Then all at once he woke up, very hot and thirsty !

What a strange thing was happening! He looked up at the frieze in his bedroom, and there, instead of seeing Mr. Noah drilling his animals, poor Mr. Noah was being chased by them.

"Help!" cried Bobby. "Poor Noah will be killed and eaten."

And his mother came running upstairs. But she quickly guessed what was the matter. Too many raspberry ices, jellies and chocolate cakes !

It was a good thing for Bobby that mother had a bottle of ENO'S "Fruit Salt" in the house. She quickly gave Bobby a deliciously cool, bubbly drink. "That's ripping!" said Bobby, and he dropped off to sleep again.

In the morning, when Bobby awoke, Noah was drilling the animals just the same as ever. "Ah!" said Bobby to Noah, "you don't know what would have happened to you if it hadn't been for ENO."

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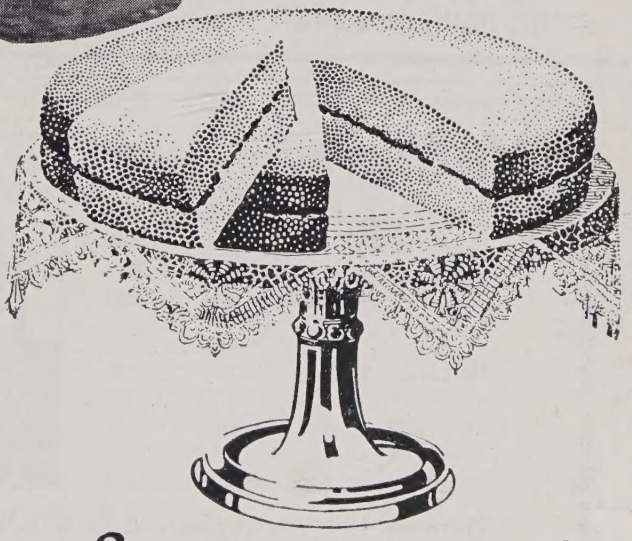

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EAST LONDON HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN, SHADWELL, E.1

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"'Times change, Mistress Harley. We seek that arch malignant, Richard Penton, who is in hiding in your house'"

(See "The Red Despatch")

Drawn by C. E. Brock

Little Folks

The Magazine for Boys and Girls

Edited by HERBERT D. WILLIAMS

With Hundreds of Colour
and Black-and-White Illustrations

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The Red Despatch

By

D. H. Parry

CHAPTER I

A Visit from the Enemy

'TWAS Tom Clark, the gamekeeper's son, who brought us the news that hot June noontide, the first we had received since our Uncle Penton rode away to join the King at Oxford more than a month before, and surely the tidings could not have been much worse as Tom told them.

Cynthia and I were returning to the house through the park, and had just been lamenting the day when Haslerig's "Lobsters" stripped it of all the fallow deer that used to browse under the oaks, when we spied a figure climb the paling and come, half running, half stumbling, towards us.

It did not need the stained bandage about his head to tell us that something was amiss, but we were little prepared for honest Tom's story.

"Bad news, bad news!" he gasped in a voice choking with dust and fatigue. "Captain Dick is a prisoner in the hands of the Roundheads, and everything is undone!"

"Yet better a prisoner than slain!" cried my sister.

"Nay, Mistress Cynthia," said the poor fellow, who was bleeding badly. "'Tis more than likely that he be both by this time, for never did I see so sore a wound as the Captain received from a harquebus bullet, which took him in mid-thigh at the very moment he and I fell into the ambush."

"I think," said Cynthia, turning very white, "'twere better you should tell it all from the beginning. But first, Martin, let us help him to the house. He can scarce stand, as it is."

"Not so, Mistress Cynthia," said Tom bravely. "The thought that Lomer's crop-eared knaves have intercepted the despatch my captain carried hurts me more than my broken head, for which I paid the varlet truly in kind with two feet of cold iron through his midriff, but, alack, there was no time to secure the precious paper hidden in the captain's boot, nor, indeed, to succour him, so had I ridden straight to Oxford but that my horse dropped dead beneath me three miles from this."

"Stephen Lomer!" cried my sister and I. "Then, indeed, is Uncle Richard killed, for Lomer was his bitterest foe!"

My mother spied us coming from the terrace, and by the time we had gotten poor Tom Clark into the hall and seated him in one of the great carved chairs, there was she, ready with strong cordial, and the maids with fresh linen smelling of lavender, and a bowl of hot water.

I can see it all now, though I was but a boy at the time, and how the sunlight flamed down through the painted windows on to Tom's grateful face.

"Heaven bless you, Mistress!" said he. "In a few minutes, when my hurts are tied, I will get me a fresh horse and be at Oxford within an hour."

"Nay, Tom," replied my mother, "you overrate your powers. You would swoon ere you had made a mile of the way, yet mayhap you have strength enough to tell us what has happened?"

Then he recounted how five hundred Cavaliers, among whom was our own troop, had ridden out of Oxford that morning, hearing of great store of forage some twenty miles distant between Faringdon and Wantage.

"As ill-luck would have it, Sir William Waller was bent upon the same errand with three regiments of horse and a company of pikes, who, seeing our people coming across the downs, attacked them on a sudden, and were in a fair way by force of numbers to take them all prisoners.

"'Twas in a winding lane gay with dog-roses; a deep hollow way very proper for an ambuscade, and our gallants taken unawares, never deeming the enemy so close.

"The Roundheads had but to thrust the long pikes on a sudden across the lane from side to side to throw the column into hopeless confusion, while their horsemen fired down over the June hedgerows into it, standing in their stirrups the better to take sure aim.

"I thought the last hour had come to us all," said Tom Clark, "and, indeed, I know not whether any be still alive, but by great good fortune our troop was the rearguard, and my Lord Byron, who commanded the party, drew us back to the crest of the hill, where there was a beech copse, and there formed us.

"'Gentlemen,' said he, 'prepare yourselves to charge yonder scum and rescue our brave companions—if God wills it; but first, Captain Penton, I would have you return to Oxford on the spur, and carry this despatch to his Gracious Majesty, who will send us prompt help.'

"I saw Captain Dick bite his lip with vexation, while my lord wrote some lines upon his saddlebow, but I knew he had chosen the best rider and the swiftest horse to be his messenger, beside having great love for our leader, and doubtless in the wish to save him from almost certain death.

"Nevertheless, when he had thrust the paper deep into his boot and signed to me to accompany him, our hearts were very heavy as we heard our trumpets sounding the advance, and we to have no part in it all."

Tom told us how they had galloped for wellnigh two leagues, my uncle saying never a word, until, just where the road left the open and plunged into the woods, he had cried: "Tom Clark, I am for Abingdon, where some troops of the Queen's Regiment are in quarters; with them I shall be back in time, while you will to Oxford with my lord's message."

"It all chanced in a moment," said honest Tom. "There was a shot from the trees in front, I saw the blood spurt from the captain's leg, and Master Lomer was upon us with fifty of his rascals, howling like wolves. I had scarce time to whip out my sword and run Job Drinkwater through after he had clipped me across the pate, when Captain Dick shouted: 'Ride for it, Tom, I command you!'"

Clark looked at my mother, as though he would ask her pardon for having obeyed his officer's order, but she only placed the cordial to his lips again and nodded him to proceed.

"Captain Dick was still in the saddle, turning his horse into a by lane when I saw him last," continued the poor fellow, whose voice had grown very weak and husky. "There were more of the knaves upon the road, but I cut a way through them somehow, and only when the mare dropped like a stone and my head began to swim did I make my way here, knowing 'twere useless to attempt Oxford afoot."

"Oxford will not see thee to-night, nor yet to-morrow, Tom Clark," said my mother firmly. "You must to bed, where I shall presently bleed thee to reduce the fever into which you have fallen, and small wonder—but what is this I hear without?"

We all heard it, and Cynthia and I ran to the window, in time to see the orange scarf about the middle of our enemy, Stephen Lomer, as he and a dozen troopers reined up with mighty clatter at the terrace steps.

"Quick!" cried my mother, who was ever calm when there was need. "Take away the bowl, and hide him in the barn beyond the stables; while you, my children, comport yourselves as though all were as usual in this unhappy house of ours. Master Lomer shall get as good as he bringeth, the canting hypocrite—even though we have no men about the place!"

So, when Stephen Lomer opened our door and stamped loudly into the hall in his great calfskin boots, he was met by a quiet look of dignified inquiry from the sweet-faced Cavalier lady who was its *chatelaine*.

"Why this intrusion, Master Lomer?" said my mother. "When my husband was alive you had scarce dared to come here in that guise, and unannounced, too."

"Times change, Mistress Harley," he answered with a scowl. "We seek that arch

malignant Richard Penton, who is in hiding in your house!"

For all her self-control my mother could not repress a start of joy at his words, from which we learned that Uncle Dick was still living.

"And since the gallant gentleman you speak of is mine own brother, where should he be more fittingly housed than under this roof?" she said, drawing herself proudly up. "Yet is he not here for all that, nor have we set eyes upon him this month and more, Stephen Lomer!"

For an instant I saw him stare at her, greatly puzzled, and then he sneered so insolently that I could have killed him on the spot.

"Time was when none doubted your word, lady, but a lying monarch finds ready imitators!" he laughed coarsely. "Richard Penton escaped us by the speed of his horse, but he could not stay his wound from betraying him. There was blood on the road yonder, and a goodly sign of it in the avenue, even to the terrace steps outside. Men, search the house, and if any resist us, slay them without mercy!"

His followers, of whom there were perhaps a dozen, and most of them from our part, stood somewhat in awe of my mother, who was indeed the Lady Bountiful of the village; but they were Lomer's tenants, and it mattered not that she had nursed this man's ailing child, and tended that man's dying wife—they must stick by their master, which, after all, was fit and proper.

And so the hunt began in good earnest, Cynthia's face scarlet with wrath as we followed them at a little distance.

I was but fifteen, my sister being two years older, and, in truth, she should have been a boy; she had so much of courage and quick wits, as you shall presently hear.

The feud between the Lomers and ourselves had been none of our seeking. It arose out of a dispute over a parcel of land which Stephen Lomer's father, the wealthy woolstapler, claimed as his because "much wanted more," when he bought the estate of my Lord Wildace which joined our own, until my father had carried the matter to the Courts at Westminster, where it was settled in our favour.

My father and the old woolstapler had been laid to rest three years already when the Rebellion broke out, and surely the thing had been better buried with them; but Stephen Lomer had kept it alive, and I verily believe that he joined the Roundheads wholly and solely because we Harleys had drawn our swords for the King ever since kings were.

And even that had not mattered so much had he behaved other than an ill-mannered dog, so that my Uncle Penton, who had his home with us, clapped him in the stocks on the green yonder one frosty day, to teach him a lesson in courtesy, and none were sorry when Stephen Lomer raked up a scurvy troop and marched away to join my Lord Manchester's army.

He had grown mighty fine during the two years since we had seen him last, being now a captain of horse, with silver lace on the sleeves of his buff coat, and that gaudy orange scarf about his middle, though of courage I swear he had little, and could not look my mother in the face, as he stamped out of this room into that, prodding the bed hangings with his drawn sword and sounding the panelling with the iron knob on the handle of it.

"I trust you are satisfied, sir?" said she with a scornful smile, as we came down into the hall again.

"We have not found him, madam. That is enough for the present. To-morrow we will search again. These things are better done by daylight," was the gruff reply, and we heard them get to horse and ride away to his own house on the other side of the valley through which the stream ran.

Then my mother drew us both to her, and the tears she had kept back so bravely flowed.

On a sudden Cynthia raised her head.

"Hark!" she whispered. "Are they back again?"

Through the open window against the last red bars of an angry sunset the dark figure of a man who had ridden up the terrace steps showed for an instant.

It was Uncle Dick Penton, and with a low moan of agony we saw him sway in his saddle and fall helpless to the ground.

"Now," exclaimed my mother, "are we indeed undone!"

CHAPTER II

Cynthia's Stratagem

WHEN I think back upon the brave figure my uncle had made as he rode away at the head of a hundred stout lads to join King Charles, his lovelock tied with a silken ribbon, a scarlet feather in his

Spanish hat, and a gold-laced baldric carrying his long sword, and then again, at that terribly crumpled form covered with blood and dust that awaited us along the gilliflowers under the window, then I say that war is a horrible thing!

'Twas an hour and more ere he opened his eyes in the close, cramped space we called the Priest's Hole, which led out of the Green Bedchamber. Thither we had carried him for safety, though, indeed, the blood had oozed out of his boot at every step of the way, leaving a trail there was no mistaking along the oaken floor!

"Thither we had carried him for safety"

Drawn by C. E. Brock

'Twould take too long to tell of his escape, which he owed to the great heart and swift limbs of his bay Barbary courser; and how he baffled his pursuers by riding up the stream into a thick osier bed, where he stayed till dusk, middle deep in water, with his sash bound about his shattered thigh. It was Cynthia who devised the great scheme after we had cut away his boot and found the red despatch within it.

"Martin," said she to me, drawing me aside into the outer room, "this must be carried to His Majesty."

"But, Cynthia, 'tis too late!" cried I. "Besides, Tom Clark is spent, and there is no man left about the place—only the maids."

I marvelled then why she should toss her pretty head with its black ringlets and look at me so oddly, half angry, yet half pitying.

"Dear Martin," she whispered, "I shall bear the paper to Oxford, though none but you must know I have gone! But listen—there is much to be donê before I depart. Did you mark how the knaves did nose about the way into the Round Room?"

I nodded, remembering that Stephen Lomer had returned to it a second time before he went away, but even now I did not grasp the thing Cynthia had in her mind, for I was too startled at the thought of my sister thinking to venture alone as far as Oxford, with the ways full of lawless men, and no moon!

"Cynthia," said I, "I will load the long pistols our father used in the wars of Gustavus of Sweden, and I shall ride with you!"

"Martin dear," she whispered, kissing me very tenderly, "there are none but our own side 'twixt this and the city, nor lives there a Royalist so base as to harm a maid who bears a message to his Sovereign. No, rest awhile until the house be quiet, and when you have saddled Silver Heart and tied her beside the mounting-block, bring the lanterns into the hall, where I shall be waiting to tell you a great secret!"

The Round Room, you must know, was all that remained of an old castle once standing where our house had been builded; a large circular tower of two stories, with arrow-slits in the ivy, and from the battlements on a clear day one might discern the spires of Oxford.

The way into the Round Room was a long stone passage leading from the entrance hall under a low Norman archway, and on the floor of the room was a great store of apples laid all through the winter upon straw.

'Twas a favourite playing-ground of ours, but there were vaults beneath it into which we had never ventured, for huge toads lived there, and all manner of noisome things.

There was only one entrance to those vaults, an oaken trap in the floor of the passage, which had not been lifted since I could remember, the ladder below it being rotted with age and unsafe, if, indeed, any of it still remained, but that was the great secret of which my sister was to tell me.

"Come, Martin," she said, when I found her awaiting me in the hall in her velvet riding dress, and, taking a lantern from my hand, she led the way to the Round Room.

"But, Cynthia," said I. "'Twere madness to bring Uncle Richard here! Even though we laid him in the chamber above 'tis the first place they will search on the morrow!"

"Dear innocent!" laughed my sister. "They will come again to-night—there is a man watching from the park even now—and that is why I am setting this lantern behind the arrowslit, that he may see it. They will not be long, I promise you, and the great door is unbarred, ready to let them in. Put your lantern upon the floor, Martin, and make haste—have you forgotten the trap? Please Heaven we can raise it against they are here!"

I knew then all that was in her mind, and clapped my hands joyously.

"Why did not I think of it?" I cried.

"You ask me a riddle, Martin," and Cynthia's dark eyes were all a-sparkle with roguery. "Perhaps 'twas because we poor simple maids may sometimes light upon things that men overlook!"

We both fell silent on a sudden, hearing a stealthy foot upon the gravel outside, and a shrill whistle farther away.

"Hush!" whispered my sister. "'Tis a blessing that the slit is too high from the ground for any to look in!" and I saw that Cynthia carried a stout cord in her hand, which had escaped my notice. "Put the lantern softly down where it may shine along the passage to be seen from the hall, and follow me."

Now the trap-door, to which we stole on tiptoe, was of stout oak planks with a sunk ring at one end, and that at the end nighest to the entrance hall.

From the ring to the hinges was greater than the length of the tallest man, being, perchance, some seven feet in all, and its width wellnigh that of the passage itself, so that, since the thing opened towards the Round Room and must be raised by hauling upon the cord passed through the ring, when once we had opened it we should find ourselves prisoners, cut off from the rest of the house

'Twas dark as pitch, too, but we knew where to seek, and our only fear was that Stephen Lomer might arrive before we had accomplished the task.

Not that either Cynthia or I was a weakling, for we were ever in the open air, and scarce a day when we did not hunt or hawk, until the Troubles put an end to country sports for a while; but the door was very heavy, we knew, and I confess my heart beat oddly and hard against my ribs as we stooped to grasp the cord in which I had made some knots.

"Both together now!" whispered my sister, and we tugged with all our might.

"'Tis useless!" I groaned, after a few moments.

"True, Martin!" and I heard her laughing in the dark. "How may we hope to move the door when the pair of us be standing upon its end?"

'Twas not easy, even when we had seen our folly and stepped back, but I could scarce keep from shouting as we felt the trap suddenly lift and come towards us with doleful creaking of the rusty hinges.

Perhaps the worst of all was after it had stood upright for a moment and began to descend upon us, so that we were wellnigh crushed beneath the weight of oak and iron; yet did we manage at last to lower it on to the stone flooring, with little noise save of our own panting.

A whiff of dank air rose from the yawning hole, which we could not see, but Cynthia gave us no time to linger there, and dragged me back into the Round Room, where we set the door half open that the lantern light might be seen, and stood listening there.

Nor had we long to wait, for from the hall on a sudden echoed men's voices, with great stamping of boots and spurs.

Surely was I no craven if my heart misgave me when I thought of the wounded

man above, and my mother knowing naught of our doings.

But truly the snare had been well laid.

Even at that distance we heard Stephen Lomer shout: "We have him—he is in the Round Room yonder! This way!" and a roar of triumph mingled with the running of many feet into the passage.

In such haste were they each and all to be first that, though we saw nothing of the thing itself by reason of the pitchy dark that filled the place, we knew why the voices ceased so oddly one after the other, the last one ending in a wild yell of terror, followed by a death-like silence!

"Martin—he is saved!" cried my sister, kissing me as we clung to each other, and snatching up the nearest lantern she led the way to the black gulf.

Never heard I aught like it—the moans and groans that came from below, for the floor of the vault was good twenty feet beneath where we stood, and all the Roundhead curs had gotten some hurt, though happily for them the earth was soft.

Stephen Lomer made to mount the ladder as our light fell on it, but it broke in his hands, leaving them prisoners at our mercy, which had been a better mercy than Master Lomer's, if his white, snarling, upturned face were anything to go by.

Then they all began to swear so lustily, knowing now from our laughter that 'twas we had trapped them, that Cynthia motioned me to help her lift the door again.

"Shame on you, Master Lomer, your words be not fit for a maid's ears!" she cried, the tears of merriment rolling adown her pretty cheeks. "Now can I carry Captain Penton's despatch to the King, who will doubtless soon rid us of you all!"

So we let fall the trap with a bang like a cannon shot, knowing they were safe among the rats and toads, and when we reached the hall once more there was our mother, a candle in her hand, wellnigh distraught at the recent tumult, dreading, as she did, another search.

As for myself, though our present danger was passed, I closed not an eye all night for thinking of my brave Cynthia, and how she might be faring, as I sat with honest Tom Clark, whom we had brought into the house again.

But when the morning dew was still sparkling like diamonds on the grass of the park a trumpet brought us out all agog, and there was Cynthia on her grey palfrey beside young Bernard Vivian at the head of his troop, which the King had sent to succour us!

I think the news they told of how my Lord Byron had brought off his men after all, with the loss of but eleven slain, did more to mend Uncle Richard than even His Majesty's own physician, who accompanied them, though, in truth, 'twas a twelvemonth ere he set foot in stirrup again, and then he carried me with him to the wars!

Yet had none of this happy ending come about, nor Stephen Lomer and his rascals cooled their heels in Oxford jail for five long years, but for my sister Cynthia's quick wits, since 'twas all of her doing!

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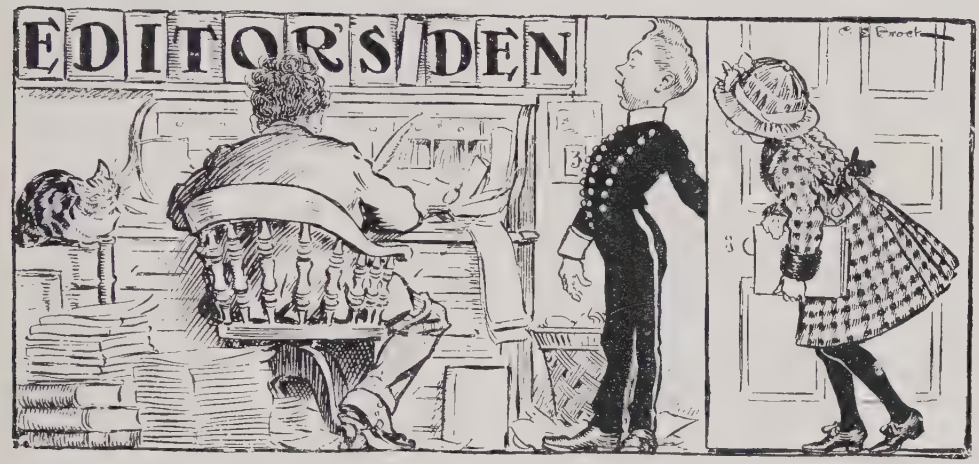


MAH-JONGG AND THE BABY

For New Readers—

FIRST of all, a great big welcome to all my new readers: I have to say this every now and again, because, of course, we are always getting new readers, and the beginning of the new volume is the proper time for them to start. So please line up in your places and make yourselves at home. Remember, please, I expect every new reader to write to me, tell me how you like the magazine, and the date of your birthday.

—and Old Ones

Having welcomed the newer ones, I want to say how awfully glad I am that so many of the older readers are staying on for another volume—or longer. When some of my readers reach their fifteenth birthday they begin to wonder whether they ought not to give up LITTLE FOLKS. They don't want to, but think they ought to buy the *Stodgy Times* or the *Magazine for the Infirm and Aged*, for the look of the thing. Well, let me tell you that I've heaps of readers older than fifteen, and it's such a bother if you drop the old magazine for a month or two, only to take it up again and find you have lost the thread of the serial. So I hereby inform you that it is quite all right continuing LITTLE FOLKS as long as your hair isn't growing grey or bald: watch your hair, that's the great thing. At the least sign of baldness, send for a 2s. 9d. bottle of "Hairsprouts" (see advertisement pages) and cancel LITTLE FOLKS.

Never Too Young

The same thing applies at the other end. You're never too young to read LITTLE FOLKS *as long as you have any hair.* I object to including bald-headed babies among my readers; they never enjoy the jokes properly, and they do maul the pictures about so. Moreover, they seem to want to *eat* the magazine. Now, LITTLE FOLKS is not a patent food for infants: it is a decent, respectable, mental tonic for young minds; and for "Editor's Den" to be eaten—bah! So I object to bald-headed babies. Otherwise, as soon as your baby brother or sister has any hair and has got one tooth through I shall be glad to welcome him or her to our ever-widening circle of readers; send his name along, with the date of his birthday, and then let him take LITTLE FOLKS twice daily between meals.

This is the rule—*so far.* But I warn everybody that presently I shall have to make the rules more stringent. I am very loath to do this—but what am I to do?

Let me explain:

The Problem of Hair

My very-much-older readers will remember the original Youngest Reader, and how she grew up to be too old for the post, and developed into the Youngest Editor. You will also remember how I told you of the coming of Peter: how he had longish hair (rather the colour of Carrots, unfortunately), and how he grabbed hold of LITTLE FOLKS before he was out of long

clothes. We had him shortened, vaccinated and duly christened as the Youngest Reader, and—in spite of restless nights—this has been a source of considerable satisfaction to your Editor.

True, one or two of my readers have written me lately about baby brothers or sisters that have arrived since, but I have felt they did not seriously challenge Peter's position as the real and authentic Y.R. Peter now has quite long hair. When he is extra thoughtful he sucks one thumb, and holds his forelock in his other hand—symbolic, of course, of great authorship in the distant future. Though displaying considerable restlessness at nights (as I have mentioned) he is a great bookworm, and gets through LITTLE FOLKS in three and a half minutes if you leave him at it.

The Youngest Reader and Uncle Useful

Nobody seemed to mind about Peter being the Youngest Reader; readers sent their congratulations, the Publisher didn't mind as long as it didn't interfere with the circulation, Covers Man hasn't any babies, Carrots says he "can't stick the little brutes," and the Powers-that-Be made no objection as long as I did not bring him up to the Den to play with the paste. As for Uncle Useful——

Now, Uncle Useful knows all about Peter: he was one of the first to send his congratulations. More than that, when the youth was only a few months old Uncle Useful came along to our house, looked thoughtful, took the baby on his knee, and professed great interest. Better still, the baby took to him at once, stopped crying, and gazed at him with mingled awe and wonder. This was eminently satisfactory, and I promptly commissioned "Pets and Pastimes Pages" for another twelve months

A New Baby

Then the bomb fell.

It was last November, I think. Uncle Useful walked into the Den much the same as he usually does—and said he had another baby! I didn't believe it at first, but when he told me it was a girl and gave me the name, I offered feeble congratulations.

That night I went home in a serious frame of mind. I foresaw that Uncle Useful's baby would soon grow hair, and would soon be shown a copy of LITTLE FOLKS. Doubtless, in her childish innocence she would grab hold of the magazine—and then they would declare her Youngest Reader! The prospect was intolerable. What could I do?

An Awkward Problem

The problem was a serious one, and needed long consideration. Finally, to my mind it resolved itself into one or other of two difficult propositions. Uncle Useful's baby girl must either (1) grow no hair, or (2) be prevented from reading LITTLE FOLKS.

Now, hair is one of the most awkward things in life. A friend of mine, a young man of only about twenty-one, used to suffer most dreadfully from baldness, and used to spend all his pocket-money buying new preparations for the growth of the hair. Sometimes it was quite painful; for, having visited a new barber who recommended a new tonic, he had to go without his lunch to buy a bottle.

But my trouble has always been the other way round. As a boy, my hair was so long that the barber always looked sullen when my mother took me to have my hair cut, and wanted to charge extra for blunting his scissors. Then, when I took to shaving, it seemed to be a bigger job every time to prevent a bristly beard from forming.

In the paper the other day I saw an advertisement of some patent stuff, and with it was a picture of a man with a clean-shaven chin. He was smiling and saying "Hurrah, I've given up shaving now!"

Wonderful thought! Could I buy a bottle of this marvellous magic, and somehow get Uncle Useful's baby's nurse to rub a little on the infant's head night and morning? Then she would be a bald-headed baby and would always be debarred by the rules from reading LITTLE FOLKS.

But supposing Uncle Useful—who generally knows all there is to know about everything—should buy a bottle of that other stuff my friend used to rub on his bald pate? Whatever would happen? It seems too terrible to think about, doesn't it, one mixture fighting another on top of a baby's head; and who knows what the awful results might not be?

Desperate Expedients

So I resolved to try no hazardous experiments Meanwhile I inquired from time to time after the health of the baby, and particularly after her hair. Both seemed to be good, and, according to latest reports, the latter is of an unusually sturdy variety, black in colour, like her father's. One grain of comfort I derived, however. The child is not yet a reader of LITTLE FOLKS. She might still be prevented.

Desperate means to that end at once suggested themselves to my mind. *Why not stop Uncle Useful's free copy of the paper?* Uncle Useful (I do not know if I ought to let this out) comes down to the Den every month on one pretext or another, and manages to walk away with a free copy of the magazine. Perhaps this could be stopped. But he might then *buy* one, and if he bought one—why, he would take the more care of it, and would be sure to pass it round the family.

Clearly that would not answer. There was only one other thing to be done. *Uncle Useful's baby must be found something even more interesting than* LITTLE FOLKS!

But here the difficulties became greater and greater. My readers daily write and assure me that this is the jolliest and most interesting magazine in the world. Therefore, it would seem hopeless to try to get any other periodical to fulfil the purpose.

Mah-Jongg to the Rescue

It was while I was meditating on this problem that I fell ill—as I mentioned last month. And a kind friend who came down to help with the nursing brought me a set of Mah-Jongg. At first I did not take much notice. Then the bright idea struck me that perhaps I could give the Mah-Jongg set to Uncle Useful's little girl, and then she would become so interested that she would never want to see LITTLE FOLKS or become Youngest Reader. But in order to see if Mah-Jongg would be suitable I thought I had better find out what it was like. So I tried a game—and have been playing it ever since! Really, it seems a truly fascinating game, and the only marvel to me is that the Chinese have been able to keep it to themselves all these hundreds of years. When you ask me what it is all about I find it very difficult to describe—there are circles and characters and bamboos, and mixed up with them are three dragons, the four winds—North, South, East and West—and some flowers and what not. With difficulty I left the fascinating little things, and came up to the Den to put the finishing touches on the new volume.

A Bright Idea

That week-end I was supposed to (1) clean up the car, and get her ready for the spring offensive; (2) overhaul my own, Mrs. Editor's, and the Youngest Editor's cycles, and pump up the tyres; (3) set the seeds for the wonderful flower collection that is going to make my new garden a little Eden for the summer, and (4) take out the Youngest Reader.

Alas! all I did was to Mah-Jongg.

Uncle Useful's baby shall not have my new set of Mah-Jongg. Instead, I shall send her a packet of double-distilled bull's-eyes which the last kind reader who called left for Carrots—and a ball, too. Perhaps a ball will keep the infant quiet. If anything else is needed—why, why didn't I think of it before?—I shall bribe baby's nurse to read to the child that long description (which I have so often tried to understand) in "Pets and Pastimes Pages" on "How to Mend a Puncture." After that, no self-respecting baby will want to read LITTLE FOLKS, and the Youngest Reader may keep the honour to himself.

The Editor

Please write and give me the names and addresses of six of your friends who do ***not*** read LITTLE FOLKS A postcard will do. Address The Editor, LITTLE FOLKS, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.4.

When Rosamund Danced

A Play in One Act

By

Dorothea Moore

This has been dramatized from the story of the same name published in the Jubilee Number of LITTLE FOLKS. This is not my usual practice—but the story is worth it!

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

In order of their appearing.

EBENEZER ARRIS, *Innkeeper of The Pig and Whistle, Chedzoy.*
COLONEL KIRKE, *Commander of Kirke's Lambs.*
SOLDIERS.
JILL GOLDEN, *Reuben's sweetheart.*
MARY COTTERILL, *Reuben's mother.*
REV. PAUL KETTERING, *an old clergyman.*
REUBEN COTTERILL, *a young countryman.*
MISTRESS ROSAMUND COPE, *Court Dancer (aged eleven).*

Period—July, 1685.

The action of the play occupies a little over an hour, on the evening of the Battle of Sedgemoor

SCENE.

Kitchen of The Pig and Whistle. Practicable window. Door L. *Movable table, with pewter mugs, a bench and a chair.*

EBENEZER ARRIS, *portly and rubicund, collecting used mugs from table, plainly in a nervous state.*

Confused shout outside.

Eb. Lord a mussey! What be you?

Voices. [*Outside.*] Have at the rebel scum! Ah! Oh!

Eb. [*Shaking visibly and going to window.*] Eh, dear! 'tis they fearsome Lambs of Colonel Kirke's, as I'm a living sinner! Lambs! Lord a mussey! *Wolves* would be the better name for 'em. [*Shouts.*] Heaven defend us here to Chedzoy! These be awesome times. [*Returns to table and continues piling mugs on tray.*] I wish King Monmouth had kep away from the West Country, that I do! The King's men may be thirsty souls, what's good for trade, but they're uncommon blood-thirsty along with it. [*Tramping outside.*] Oh!

[*Enter* COLONEL KIRKE *and soldiers.*]

Kirke. A draught of ale, fellow, and see it be worth the drinking, or you'll swing from your own inn-sign!

Eb. [*Retreating backwards before him.*] Oh, sir! Oh, your honour!

Kirke. Don't stand there oh-ing me, man; there's a beam yonder uncommon handy, and my men are experts at the hangman's job already.

Soldiers. [*Hustling him across the floor.*] That we are! Stir your stumps—ale pots!

Kirke. [*Laughing and strolling across to window.*] Faith! but this rebel-chasing is thirsty work! [*Yawns.*] [*Sounds of wheels without.*]

Kirke. [*Looking from window.*] What's this? A coach? As I live, 'tis a fine Court coach, all gilding and roses. Pink me! But it seems I am to have diversion—and in time, before rebel-hunting grows stale. A lady's coach—a fine Court lady's. Here she comes! A lady, and she's getting out, by all that's lucky! A lady—Bah! Only a child, after all. Plague on the brat! [*Turns back discontentedly into the room as the innkeeper enters with tray and ale mugs. He trembles.*] Why, man, have you gotten an ague?

Eb. N . . . o . . . noble sir.

Kirke. For if you have, hanging is a certain cure for that and all ills.

Eb. Your w-worship's valour wouldn't be so c-cruel?

Kirke. We'll see what your ale's like. [*Drinks.*] Ditchwater! Ditchwater! [*Advances threateningly on innkeeper.*] You dare to set ditchwater before Colonel Percy Kirke, you snivelling scum!

Eb. 'Tis the best I have, the very best, I swear it is!

Kirke. The best? Then you've no right to swing an inn-sign—you shall swing in its place! [*Soldiers lay hold upon him, pushing him to door.*]

Eb. Oh, sir! Oh, noble Colonel! You can't hang me because you don't like my ale!

Kirke. Oh, you're all rebels at heart here! [*Confused noises outside, then* JILL'S *voice raised in anguish.*]

Jill. [*Outside.*] No! No! For mercy's sake!

Mother. [*Outside.*] He's no rebel, my lad ain't!

Kirke. Let the innkeeper go—here's better sport, it seems. Fetch the rebel in. [*Soldiers release innkeeper and run out, returning holding a young countryman, with arms behind him, dusty and dishevelled.* JILL, *a pretty country girl, is trying to cling to him. His mother follows, supported by an old clergyman.*]

Kirke. [*Amused.*] So! How many more candidates for the gallows? [*Lounges back in chair.*]

Jill. [*Flinging herself on her knees before* KIRKE.] Sir, spare him! Spare him! We are to be wed come Sunday, and him a good lad always, as his reverence here would tell 'ee.

"Rosamund begins to dance. There is first silence, then a murmur of admiration"— p. 14

Drawn by C. E. Brock

Rev. P. Ket. I can, indeed, sir. [*Enter* ROSAMUND, *a little girl of eleven, richly dressed. She stands still in doorway, her face expressing, first wonder, then anger, then horror as she listens.*]

Mother. Your honour, be merciful this once, as you hope for mercy. He is no rebel.

Reuben. [*Sturdily.*] Oi be no rebel!

Mother. He speaks God's truth, sir; he is no rebel. He did but change clothes with one of the poor wounded lads your men were hunting down to give him a chance for life. There's his reverence here will tell you that my lad's bin carting hay all the week, and ha' had nowt to do wi' the Monmouth men—and 'im and Jill 'ere to be wed come Sunday!

Rev. P. K. Indeed, Colonel Kirke, I can promise you that the women speak entire truth. I know this poor lad well; he comes from my parish of Westham, but a mile away, and he has——

Kirke. [*Yawning widely.*] String him up!

Jill. No! No! [*Clinging to Reuben.*]

Rev. P. K. Sir, you cannot intend to hang the poor lad untried. I can tell you he only changed clothes with . . .

Kirke. More fool he! String him up at the inn door. [*Soldier seizes him.*]

Mother, Jill. and Rev. P. K. Mercy! Mercy!

Rosamund. [*Springing forward.*] Hold! You shall not hang him! [*All pause.*]

Kirke. [*Aside.*] The brat of the coach. [*Aloud, sneering.*] Shan't I, indeed, Mistress Midget? And who may you be, pray?

Rosamund. [*With dignity.*] I am Mistress Rosamund Cope, Court Dancer—and I say this poor man shall not hang!

Kirke. Mistress Rosamund Cope, the little dancer of Whitehall! I've never seen you dance, i'faith; but I've heard of you. They say you never tire!

Rosamund. I will dance for you now, sir, if you will give your word to spare this poor man's life. [*Long-drawn breath from group round* REUBEN.]

Kirke. You will, will you? See here, you little madam with the free tongue. I've an hour to wait here in this plaguing dull village before my Lord Churchill can join me, and naught to do with my leisure. If you dance me through that hour—never stopping—*never stopping*—you shall have the fellow's life, I swear it—he goes free. If you pause, I fill up the interval by hanging him, as he deserves. Is it a bargain? [*Suspense of* MOTHER, JILL, *and* OLD CLERGYMAN.]

Rosamund. [*Sweeping* KIRKE *a curtsy.*] I accept the terms of your bargain, sir.

Kirke. Make a clear space. [EB. *moves chairs, etc.*] Push the rebel and his friends against the wall, where they can obtain a good view of the lady dancing for a life—his life!

Rosamund. [*Holding out her hands to* MOTHER *and* JILL.] He shall *not* hang!

Jill and Mother. Oh, little mistress, God will reward you!

Kirke. 'Tis six all but a minute now, and a striking clock on your church tower. All can mark the passing of the time! Sergeant, have your noose in readiness, and if Mistress Rosamund Cope, Court Dancer, tires before she has danced her hour, draw the noose tight.

Mother and Jill. Oh!

Rev. P. K. Sir, 'tis an inhuman bargain. Make the hour half!

Kirke. No! [*To* ROSAMUND.] Mistress Midget, if you are not disposed to cry off your bargain now you look it in the face, we are all attentive, and the hour is—— [*Clock begins to strike slowly.*] Six precisely. My Lord Churchill will not interrupt your prancings until seven.

Rosamund. I stand to my bargain, sir.

Kirke. And I to mine. [*Sits.*]

[*Rosamund begins to dance. There is first silence, then a murmur of admiration swelling.*]

Eb. and Soldier. Bravo!

Kirke. 'Tis marvellous. I had heard she wakes enthusiasm at Whitehall. S'life! I don't wonder at it!

[*First quarter strikes.*]

Kirke. [*Sardonically.*] Ah! 'Tis easy talking at the first quarter, Mistress Rosamund Cope. Three-quarters still to run if you're to save the rebel.

Rosamund. As I shall. [*She dances on swelling murmur of admiration.*]

Eb. and Soldier. Bravo!

Eb. 'Tis fine!

Mother. She's tiring.

Rosamund. I am not!

Kirke. Are you not, Mistress Midget? I think you are!

Rosamund. Sir, I am fresher than the daisies!

[*Second quarter strikes.*]

[*Long breath from all except* ROSAMUND *and* KIRKE.]

Kirke. Fresher than the daisies? You're lighter than the thistledown—I'll say that for you!

Rev. P. K. Heaven send her strength!

Eb. and Soldier. Bravo! Bravo!

Jill. My lad!

Mother. Heaven bless her, the dear lamb!

[ROSAMUND *stumbles, but recovers herself.*]

Kirke. Oho! Mistress Court Dancer, finding your bargain none so simple, eh? [*To* REUBEN.] Don't be too sure you'll escape the noose, man!

Jill. Oh, sir!

Reuben. Oi beant sure of nowt, sir, save that little miss 'ull do her best for oi, and oi be vair grateful, whatso'er befall.

Rosamund. [*Jerkily.*] You—shall—not—hang!

[*Third quarter strikes.*]

Kirke. Shan't he! Shan't he! What would you give for a minute's rest, my little dancer?

Rosamund. Not—this — man's — life. [*She staggers, but recovers.*]

Rev. P. K. Sir, have mercy! 'Tis rank cruelty to drive your bargain to the end!

Kirke. She took the terms

Mother. She cannot do it.

Jill. Oh, my lad!

Kirke. Eh, Mistress Dancer, will you cry off your bargain now?

Rosamund. No! I'll—dance—my—hour!

[*A tense minute, as all strain forward watching her as she dances on. Into the silence comes a clattering of horses' hoofs outside, and the opening chime of the four quarters.*]

Soldier. My Lord Churchill—and seven of the clock.

[*Long breath of relief from watchers.*]

Rev. P. K. Thanks be to Heaven. [*The seven strokes follow the striking of the quarters.* KIRKE *holds up his hand, and* ROSAMUND *stops dancing. He sweeps off his hat and bows to her very low.*]

Kirke. [*To* SOLDIER.] Release the prisoner! On my life, rebel, you're in luck! [*To* MOTHER *and* JILL.] Take him; he is free!

Jill. Reuben, my lad! My lad! Safe! [*Clings to him.* ROSAMUND *drops to floor, hiding her face.*]

Mother. [*Kneeling by* ROSAMUND.] Mistress, little mistress, how can we thank you, my lad and his lass here and I? [*She sobs on.*]

Kirke. [*Gently raising her.*] What! Tears from so gallant a little lady? Never cry now, when you have won the game and saved a life by your courage and endurance. On my life, I could almost find it in my heart to wish you were a boy that you might grow into a soldier! Wine, fellow. [*To* INNKEEPER.]

Innkeeper. Y-yes, noble Colonel! 'Tis the b-best I have in my poor house.

Kirke. It should be! Drink, child, and then let me put you back into your coach, to forget all that has passed, except that the man owes you his neck.

Rosamund. [*Giving him her hand.*] I thank you, sir.

Mother. Mistress mebbe, 'tis a liberty to be asking, but would 'ee let Reuben's mother kiss 'ee?

Rosamund. [*Flinging her arms round* MOTHER *and* JILL.] Oh, I'm so glad! So glad! And I hope you will all be happy now for always. [REUBEN *picks up the hem of her frock and kisses it.*]

Kirke. Come, little madam!

Rev. P. K. May Heaven grant that the gift which you have used so splendidly, my child, may be blessed to you for ever.

Rosamund. I thank you, sir.

Kirke. Come. [*He leads her out.*]

CURTAIN.

NEW SERIAL STORY

Winning her Colours

By CHRISTINE CHAUNDLER

CHAPTER I

The New Rule

"THAT'S right, Pip. Pass to your centre. Now on to it again. Take it up yourself. Good, very good! Now shoot—you're in the goal circle. Good shot! Very good shot, indeed!"

"Well played, Pip! Jolly well played!" shouted the onlookers who were watching the hockey practice this bright October afternoon, a couple of weeks after the commencement of the autumn term. There was not a great number of onlookers. The practice this afternoon was not a very important one, being merely between two scratch teams drawn from the ranks of the Middle and Lower Fourth, and most of the girls of St. Cecilia's College who were not themselves playing were watching an exciting game which was taking place at the other end of the playing-field between the members of the First and Second Hockey Teams. Not many people thought it worth while to stand and watch a Middle School practice, even though Miss Parr, the games mistress at St. Cecilia's, was devoting her attention this afternoon to coaching the Fourth Form players. But towards the end of the game, some of the Fourth who were not playing had come to watch their comrades being put through their paces by the College coach, and those of them who belonged to Pip Martin's form, the Lower Fourth, cheered vociferously as Pip scored her goal.

Miss Parr's whistle for end of play rang out before the goal-keeper had retrieved the ball from the net, and the games mistress made her way across the ground to the girl whose well-directed shot had sent it there, with a look of approval on her face.

"You played very well, Philippa," the mistress said, reverting to the use of Pip's proper name. In the excitement of those last thrilling moments, she had been unconsciously using the nickname by which Pip was known throughout the length and breadth of St. Cecilia's. "Very well, indeed! Your shooting and passing are excellent, and you have more than maintained the improvement I noticed at the end of last season. You must try and get out of the way of taking those flying shots at the ball, though. They generally come off with you, I must admit, but, all the same, they are bad play. If you did happen to miss, you would have no possible chance of retrieving the ball. Always stop the ball dead before you shoot, except in the rarest instances. And, Philippa, you must take more care about offside. You run so quickly that you are always in danger of out-running your forward line. Keep your eye on your centre-forward—she's the person to mark. Centre-forward

sets the pace for the forward line, as I'm always telling you girls. If you keep in line with her, it won't be your fault if things go wrong."

"Yes, Miss Parr. I'll try and remember," Pip said dutifully. Then, as the mistress turned from her to speak to another player, the Lower Fourth girl raced across the field to where Aileen Richards and Susie Warner, both, like Pip, members of Four B, were strolling on slowly, waiting for their friend to overtake them.

"What was the Banker saying to you? You were looking jolly pleased about it. Was she telling you how well you'd played?" inquired Susie as Pip came running up.

Pip nodded her head. She was too out of breath with the exertions of the game and her sprint across the field to answer in any other way for a moment. She thrust a hand through the arm of each of her two chums, and the three began to walk leisurely down towards the school, arm-in-arm together.

"Yes," said Pip, when she had recovered her breath sufficiently to speak. "She said my shooting and passing were O.K., though she jawed me a bit about offside and not stopping the ball dead before I took a slog at it. But she didn't jaw angrily—not as if she were really annoyed about it, you know. Only a take-care-and-not-do-it-next-time sort of jaw."

"I know! Taking a friendly sort of interest in you. It's rather a compliment to have the Banker jawing you that way. She never bothers to do it unless she thinks a girl's really good. You were good this afternoon, Pip. Do you know what Aileen and I think? We think you're in the running for the Second team."

"You don't *really*, do you? It would be scrumptious if I could get into that! But I don't suppose I've got the least little bit of a chance. There're heaps of Upper and Middle Fourth girls who are better than I am, and there's only one vacancy, you know," Pip said modestly.

"Yes, I know. But the vacancy is for a forward, and there aren't many of the Upper or Middle Fourth who can run as fast as you," Susie reminded her.

"Speed isn't everything," objected Pip.

"It's a good bit. And besides, speed isn't your only strong point by long chalks. You can shoot and pass, too, and you're one of the best hands at dodging that I ever saw," Susie said. "Miss Parr had her eye on you every time you hit the ball. She didn't miss a stroke you made, and she nodded her head sort of approvingly every time you made an extra good one. Didn't she, Aileen?"

Aileen Richards gave a confirmatory nod.

"Yes," she replied. She seemed to be dividing her attention between you and Edith Hart from Middle Four. If you ask me, I should say it's either you or Edith who'll be chosen for the Second Eleven vacancy."

"I do *hope* it will be me," sighed Pip longingly.

"So do all of us," said Susie heartily. "Edith Hart's a rotter. And, anyway, even if she wasn't, we don't want anybody promoted out of Middle Four. They're all cocky and bossy enough as it is. If one of them got into the Second Eleven, there'd be no sticking them. You must buck up and play your very best, Pip, these next few days, and try and get Miss Parr to pick you. It wouldn't half be a sell for Middle Four if you *did* get elected."

"There's somebody calling us," said Aileen at this moment, as a series of shouts was heard in the rear. "Oh, it's Sheila Morris! We'd better go back and see what she wants." And the three juniors—Lower Fourth ranked with the Junior School at St. Cecilia's—turned and hurried back to meet the tall girl who was shouting to them from the rear. Sheila Morris was not only one of the prefects, she was Four B's dormitory monitress to boot. And if you were a junior at St. Cecilia's, it was diplomatic to render instant obedience to prefects and dormitory monitresses.

"Wonder what she wants? Perhaps she wants you, Pip? She's one of the games committee. Perhaps the Banker has been telling her how well you played and she wants to congratulate you about it," Susie said.

But it was upon no such pleasant subject that the senior wished to speak. She came striding up to the three juniors with a forbidding frown upon her face.

"You three, you're walking arm-in-arm out of doors. Report to me in my study after tea this evening for punishment," she rapped out.

The three delinquents set up a chorus of dismay.

"Sheila! But we aren't out of doors! We're on the playing-ground! Arm-in-arm doesn't count on the playing-ground," Pip remonstrated

"Excuse me, but it does," Sheila informed her, while a girl who was walking with her, Meg Harrow from Form Five A, said with a laugh:

"If you're not out of doors on the playground, I don't know when you might be supposed to be there!"

"Well, but Miss Druce didn't mean the playing-field when she made the rule about not walking arm-in-arm out of doors," Pip argued indignantly. "She meant out in the roads—when we were out for a walk or out on leave. We can go arm-in-arm anywhere we like in the school grounds—Miss Druce didn't mean them for out of doors."

But her eloquent explanation was quite wasted on Sheila.

"Kindly report to me for your punishment directly after tea to-night," the prefect said shortly. And she walked on with Meg, leaving the three juniors boiling over with indignation.

"Well, of all the——"

"Beastly mean pigs!" Pip finished Susie's sentence for her. "What an absolutely rotten thing to go and do! She alters the Head's rules to suit herself and then gives us a punishment for breaking one we've never heard of! I call it a beastly, mean shame!

"What's a shame?" asked Rita Deans, who, with several other members of Form Four B, was coming down the field just behind and who overheard Pip's angry declaration.

"Why, Sheila Morris!" burst out Pip. "At least, what she's just been doing is a shame."

"What *has* she been doing?" asked Phyllis Clynton

"Hauled us up for walking arm-in-arm! We've all three got to go to her study after tea for punishment. And everybody knows Miss Druce only meant out in the roads and in public places when she made that rule about arm-in-arm! Sheila Morris is a rotter to go altering rules to please herself, and I'm hanged if I'm going to her study to be punished by her," Pip fumed.

"Oh, but haven't you heard? Weren't you in Hall when she gave it out?" cried Rita.

"Gave what out?" demanded Pip.

"Who are you talking about?" asked Susie.

"Why, Christabel! That was what the assembly was for after dinner to-day. Didn't you go to it?" asked Rita.

Pip chuckled impishly.

"S'matter of fact, we didn't! Susie and Aileen and I had something of our own on when the bell rang, and we decided to be deaf and not hear it. Christabel is always having assemblies for some little silly thing or other. She's only been head girl for a fortnight, and we've already had more assemblies than we had the whole of last term when Eleanor was head. We're about fed-up with them, so we thought we'd give the one to-day a miss. Besides, the toffee would have been spoilt if we'd left it just then."

"Toffee! Were you making toffee? Oh, Pip, do be an angel and share it round," chorused the other members of Four B.

"You silly ass, Pip! You've gone and let the cat out of the bag nicely now!" said Susie.

"Never mind! We should have had to have let it out after tea anyway. Yes, we're going to share it round in prep to-night. But for goodness' sake don't go shouting out about it all over the field like that, or one of the pre's will hear."

"But where did you make it? Where did you get the butter and treacle from, and how *did* you manage to cook it without anybody catching you?" questioned the eager members of the Lower Fourth.

Pip chuckled again.

"We made it up in the science room, over one of the gas retorts. As for where we got the things from, that's our secret! Perhaps we'll tell you one day, if you're good children. But not up here on the playing-field with half the school within earshot."

"How did you get into the science room?" asked Lucy Weatherall inquisitively. "I thought Miss Macpherson always kept the door locked."

"So she does, but we got in through one of the windows," Pip informed her. "It's quite easy. You just climb up on to the roof of that lean-to shed at the bottom of the quad and crawl along the wall and then haul yourself up by the ivy. We'll show you one day when nobody's about. But it will have to be when the quad's quite empty. We sit at the table just close to the dining-hall door, you know. And as soon as dinner was over to-day, we slipped out and scooted through the corridors, fast as we could lick, and were safely inside the science room before anybody else came out. That was one reason why we couldn't come when the bell rang for assembly.

We couldn't very well climb down from the window with all the pre's and monitresses about in the quad. And by the time the quad was empty, we should have been late for assembly, so we thought it wiser not to put in an appearance at all. Besides, Christabel's assemblies are always about such footling little things. She's not had a single really important one since she's been head girl."

"It was important to-day," said Rita. "It was to tell us about the new arm-in-arm rule. Miss Druce doesn't like the way we walk down from the field on match days. She thinks it gives visitors a wrong impression of the school to see us walking arm-in-arm. She told the prefects they must stop it when outside matches are being played. And the prefects have decided to stop it always, and they've made the playing-field one of the places where you mustn't be seen arm-in-arm."

"Oh, I say! Then it was a proper rule after all!" cried Susie in concern.

"Well, it's a jolly mean one then!" said Pip hotly. "And it's beastly mean of Sheila to go dropping down upon us first day. She might have given us time to learn about it."

"She couldn't know you didn't know about it," remarked Lucy Wetherall primly. "She'd think of course that you'd been in Hall when Christabel gave it out, since it's a rule that everybody must go straight to Hall when the bell rings for assembly."

"Yes, Pip, I think she was within her rights to-day," said Rita. "She is rather mean sometimes, of course. Most of the pre's are at times. Last term, when she was working up for that musical scholarship, she was almost unbearable. But then, I expect that was mostly nerves. Geniuses nearly always are irritable at times, and Sheila's a musical genius, you know."

"Sheila's *not* mean. She's really awfully nice when you know her properly," put in Moira Hill timidly. Moira was a shy retiring member of Four B, only promoted to the form this term, and rather out of place amongst her more boisterous companions. As she acted as fag to Sheila Morris, she ought to have known something about the prefect's character, but Four B, though it was uniformly kind to its shy member, did not take much account of her opinions, and Pip over-ruled her shy interposition.

"Well, she's not been awfully nice to-day," she said with decision. "I think it's absolutely rotten of her to go hauling us up for something which we didn't even know about."

"You can't tell her you didn't know about it, though, or she'll want to know where you were when Christabel called the assembly," Rita pointed out.

"I suppose we can't. But it's a beastly shame to go punishing us for it first day, all the same," Pip grumbled. "I've a jolly good mind not to go to her study after tea. Why should *I* go to her to be punished? Let her come to me if she wants to go giving me a punishment!"

"Oh, Pip! You'll *have* to go if she's told you to! You can't help going when a prefect tells you to," said Lucy, aghast at such a rebellious declaration.

"Of course she'll go! Pip's not such a donkey as to go cutting off her nose to spite her own face," said Susie decidedly. "You'll be an awful ass if you don't go, Pip. Sheila's just as likely as not to go sending you up to Miss Druce if you don't report yourself when you're told to."

"I suppose I shall have to go," Pip admitted reluctantly. Not even Pip, though she was far and away the most daring and obstreperous member of the junior school, dared to indulge in quite such open rebellion where a prefect was concerned. Prefects were awe-inspiring personages at St. Cecilia's! "But I shan't love Sheila Morris any the better for having to, I can tell you. And I shall pay her out for her meanness one day—you just wait and see if I don't!"

"Rot! You can't pay out a prefect," scoffed Rita.

"Can't I?" retorted Pip. "You wait and see if I can't! Maybe you won't have to wait so very long, either."

"We shan't be changed in time for tea if we stay here arguing much longer," interposed Aileen soothingly. And realizing the truth of this remark, the juniors ceased their squabbling, and made their way—not arm-in-arm this time—down to the school.

CHAPTER II

A Chapter of Punishments

PIP thought better of that half-expressed determination of hers not to go to Sheila Morris's study. There was nothing to be gained by open defiance of a prefect at St. Cecilia's. You might, as

"Pip turned with a cold thrill of horror, to find Miss Druce, the headmistress, gazing at her in astonishment"

Drawn by Elizabeth Earnshaw

Susie had hinted, find yourself sent up for an interview with the Head had you the temerity to try such a thing. Pip went along with her two friends after tea that night, to the little room in the prefects' corridor which belonged to Sheila, and sulkily prepared to learn her fate.

Sheila swung round upon the three with a frown as they presented themselves before her in reply to her "Come in."

"Oh, here you are! I should just like to hear what you've got to say for yourselves—deliberately breaking the new rule on the very first day it was made. You heard what Christabel Collier said in assembly, I suppose?"

The three culprits were silent. They couldn't very well say that they *hadn't* heard, for that would lead to awkward questions being asked as to why they hadn't. If by any chance their absence from assembly and their unauthorized use of the science room for culinary purposes were to come to light, they would all be in a much worse pickle than the one they were in already. So they deemed it wiser to say nothing, hoping that Sheila would not insist upon an answer to her question.

Sheila fortunately didn't. Without waiting for a reply, the prefect went on:

"I suppose you did it out of bravado, thinking that we did not really mean to enforce it. I can assure you that we are not going to have our orders defied like this. When we say that we're going to stop the silly habit of walking about arm-in-arm on the playing-field, we mean exactly what we say. If you'd done it just for a moment, out of forgetfulness, we might possibly have excused it. But it wasn't just for a moment, and you couldn't possibly, all *three* of you, have forgotten so soon the warning that Christabel gave you. I am quite satisfied that you did it out of sheer naughty defiance, and I'm going to give you a severe punishment accordingly—to show you and the other juniors that defiance of prefects' orders doesn't pay. You will all three of you write me out a hundred lines apiece and bring them to me directly after breakfast to-morrow morning. And, Pip Martin, you were the worst. It was you who linked arms with Aileen and Susie, not they with you. So you, please, in addition to the lines, will stand out at supper-time to-night."

"Sheila! Stand out! Oh, you can't go giving me a baby punishment like that!" cried Pip in dismay.

"Oh, Sheila, no! Not standing out! She really wasn't any worse than Aileen and me. We none of us meant to disobey. Can't we all do lines for you? It isn't fair to go punishing Pip so much more than us," Susie remonstrated, while Aileen was moved out of her usual quietness to say pleadingly:

"Don't stand her out! Or if you do, please stand Susie and me out as well! We really are awfully sorry about walking arm-in-arm."

"I've no doubt you are—now that you see that we really mean it," Sheila observed drily. "No, I'm afraid lines alone won't quite meet the case for Pip. She defied our orders, flagrantly and publicly. It was obvious to everybody that she was the chief offender. We saw her run across the field to you two and deliberately link arms with you, and we've decided that she must suffer a public punishment by way of example to the rest of the kids. Now then, cut off to your classroom. The bell for prep. will be ringing in a minute. You can do the lines out of 'Paradise Lost.' I don't care which you choose as long as you do a hundred of them, all different."

"Sheila, really I didn't do it deliberately! I never meant to defy you. Please don't make me stand out," said Pip, making one last effort to escape the obnoxious punishment.

Standing out at meals—being "pilloried" as it was called in the school—was a humiliating ordeal detested by the juniors of St. Cecilia's, to whom alone it was ever applied. No senior could be "stood out" by the prefects, and not many of the juniors ever were, although occasionally some small delinquent from Forms One or Two, too juvenile to be punished by lines, was sentenced to the pillory for some more than usually outrageous act of insubordination. No member of Form Four B had been pilloried before within the memory of the form's present occupants, and Pip was filled with consternation at the thought of the coming ordeal. "I'll promise faithfully never to walk arm-in-arm with anybody again—up on the playing-field or anywhere else! And I'll take as many conduct marks as you like and write as many hundreds of lines as you like, if you'll only be a brick and let me off the pillory! You'll really be a beastly pig if you make me stand out, for, honour bright, I didn't mean to disobey!"

"You've heard what your punishment is,

and now will you kindly clear out?" said Sheila majestically. She moved across the room and opened her study door with a commanding gesture to the juniors.

"Cut," she said briefly.

Aileen and Susie began to obey, but Pip was unwise enough to essay another remark.

"I think it's perfectly beastly of you——" she began. But she never completed her sentence. The prefect made a quick movement. Pip found herself grasped by the shoulders, with no gentle grip, swung from her feet and deposited outside in the corridor. The next moment the study door was shut firmly and decidedly in the faces of the three of them.

Pip scrambled to her feet and, red-hot with indignation, she flung herself against the door, at which she began to thump and kick in a paroxysm of rage.

"Beast! Beast! Beast!" she shouted, almost beside herself with anger. She was going on to tell Sheila her private and particular opinion of her, when a shocked voice at the end of the corridor brought her to her senses with surprising suddenness.

"Philippa!" said the voice. And Pip turned with a cold thrill of horror to find Miss Druce, the headmistress of St. Cecilia's, gazing at her in astonishment.

"It was a dreadful disgrace standing on the platform so that everybody could see her"

Drawn by Elizabeth Earnshaw

"Philippa, did I hear aright? Were you really shouting 'beast' through Sheila's door?"

Pip hung her head, while a hot colour flooded her face from brow to chin.

"Y-y-yes, Miss Druce," she breathed.

The Head gazed down at her in sorrowful solemnity.

"That is not a fitting term to apply to a prefect, Philippa. It is not a fitting term for a girl to use at all, and as long as I am headmistress of St. Cecilia's, I will not allow it to be used in my hearing by any girl with impunity. You will forfeit your playtime to-morrow afternoon and stay in to write an essay for me of not less than a thousand words, upon the proper and correct use of the word 'beast.' And since after such an angry burst of temper, I am sure you cannot be in a fit frame of mind to come into chapel to-night, I wish that you should go to your dormitory directly after supper and get into bed."

And Miss Druce turned and went away upon her original errand, leaving three very depressed Fourth Formers behind her.

They watched her disappear round a corner, then they began to walk soberly towards their classroom, Pip sunk in gloom and the other two silent from sympathy. It was not until the classroom was almost reached that either of Pip's friends ventured to break in upon her gloomy reflections. But when at last they turned into

the classroom corridor, Susie said sympathetically:

"What awful bad luck Miss Druce coming along just then! You do have rotten luck, Pip."

"Perfectly putrid," agreed Pip despondently. "Sheila's punishments were bad enough—these of Miss Druce's just about put the lid on. It only remains now for Christabel and Miss Kent and matron to drop down upon me for something to make this a really perfect sort of day!"

"I wish Sheila would let us share the standing-out punishment with you," murmured Aileen, laying her hand on Pip's arm.

"What's the good of saying that? You know she won't!" said Pip savagely.

"You needn't get ratty about it! We were only sympathizing," said Aileen, inclined to be indignant at Pip's tone.

"Poor old girl! I'm frightfully sorry for you," said Susie commiseratingly. "Wish there was something we could do to help!"

"I know what we can do," said Aileen. "We can help you with your essay. Susie and I can think of things for you to say, and make notes for you, so that you won't find it so difficult when you come to write it."

"Oh, yes, we can do that," said Susie eagerly.

"Thanks awfully. That will help quite a lot," Pip said gratefully. "I was wondering what on earth I could find to say about it. I was a beast to go cutting up rough with you two just now. I know you were only trying to sympathize."

"Who was that saying 'beast'? Philippa Martin, was it you? You know quite well, Philippa, that that word is not permitted to be used here except in its proper meaning. You will take a bad mark for using it." And Miss Kent, Form Four B's form mistress, bent a disapproving glance upon Pip, as she passed her three pupils on her way up the corridor.

Pip gave a gasp of dismay. Then, as the mistress vanished from sight, she staggered weakly back against the wall and began to giggle helplessly.

"Oh goodness! What will happen next? Did you ever know anything so silly in your life! It's perfectly absurd! I can't draw a breath without getting a punishment of some sort this evening," she gurgled.

Her two friends could not help joining in her mirth.

"It is rather funny," laughed Aileen. "At least, it would be," she amended, "if it wasn't so frightfully rotten for you."

"You do seem to be putting your foot into it a bit," said Susie. "What have you been doing—looking at the new moon through glass, or breaking a mirror or spilling the salt, or what?"

"What are you kids doing there? You all ought to be in at prep. The bell went ages ago," said a voice in the distance, and at the sound of it, Pip suddenly took to her heels and fled.

"It's Christabel! For Heaven's sake come along! I shall be getting a punishment from her in a minute," she gasped.

CHAPTER III

A Plan for Revenge

ALTHOUGH Pip's good humour was somewhat restored by that bad mark from Miss Kent—it really was rather funny the way ill-luck seemed to pursue her this evening!—her spirits sank again as the time for the pillory punishment drew near. She went up to her dormitory at the end of preparation to change her frock for supper in a very depressed frame of mind, and with wild schemes for pretending illness in order to escape the humiliating ordeal seething in her brain.

On consideration, however, she decided that she would probably only make matters worse by attempting such an evasion. If you "went sick" at St. Cecilia's you had matron to reckon with, and matron had a keen eye for pretenders—not to mention a peculiarly nauseous dose which she kept for "suspicious" cases. With the aid of a clinical thermometer matron would soon detect the imposture. And, anyway, even if she did manage to escape the supper ordeal, Pip came to the conclusion that she would only be postponing the evil day.

"Sheila'd only make me stand out some other time," Pip told herself as she brushed her hair. "P'raps she'd make me do it at dinner-time to-morrow, and that would be ever so much worse. It will be beastly enough to have to do it in front of all the girls and whichever mistress is on duty to-night. But it would be a thousand times worse to be stood out when the Head and all the mistresses were there!" For Miss Druce and her staff always took their midday dinner in the dining-hall with the school, sitting in state at the high table on the raised dais at one end of the hall.

So in the end Pip decided to face it at once and get it over. And having made herself as tidy as possible in view of the conspicuous position she was shortly to occupy, she went downstairs to meet her fate.

The ordeal was every bit as bad as she had anticipated. Miss Ross, the Fifth Form mistress, was taking supper, and after she had said grace and the girls had sat down, Christabel Collier, who had remained standing, spoke to her.

"If you please, Miss Ross, Philippa Martin is to stand out during supper to-night," the head girl said.

Miss Ross looked at her inquiringly.

"Indeed, Christabel? I am sorry to hear that. What is the punishment for, may I ask?"

"For disobeying the new rule about not linking arms on the playing-field. She linked arms deliberately with two other juniors only a few hours after the order had been given out, and walked almost the whole length of the field arm-in-arm with them," Christabel replied.

"That was exceedingly disobedient," said the mistress. "What about the other two offenders, though—the girls with whom she linked arms? Are not they to share the punishment?"

"No, the prefect who caught them thought that Philippa was the chief offender," Christabel replied. "It was she who linked arms—they merely acted passively. They have, of course, been given a slight punishment but we thought that justice required that Philippa should be punished more severely than they. So we wish her to stand out during supper to-night as a warning to any other girls who think that it doesn't matter whether or not they keep the new rule."

"Very well, Christabel. Come up here to the high table, Philippa. Stand there. No, more to the front of the platform so that everybody may see you. Face the room and stand properly, please, feet together, hands behind you—and while you stand there I hope you will reflect upon the foolishness of your conduct. It is a terrible disgrace for a girl of your age to have to stand out."

It was a dreadful disgrace—as Pip was fully aware. But it is to be feared that her reflections as she stood on the platform were not so much concerned with the foolishness of her own conduct as with furious indignation against Sheila Morris for having made her suffer the indignity of the pillory, and with evolving naughty schemes for "paying her out."

"What can I do?" Pip thought fiercely, as she glared at the long shining pigtail of her enemy—Sheila was sitting at the table just below the platform with her back towards the spot where the junior stood. "Make her an apple-pie bed? Rag her study? Apple-pie beds are so common. And anyway, as I sleep in the next cubie to hers, she'd guess it was me right away. And it would be so awfully difficult to find a chance to rag her study without being certain of being found out."

The long half hour during which supper lasted dragged itself to an end at last. To Pip, supper-time had never seemed so long before. Miss Ross rose to say grace, and the school rose with her, and Pip drew a deep breath of relief at the prospect of release. But she had still to wait a little longer—Miss Ross had something to give out.

"Miss Clifford wishes me to say that there is to be a special meeting of the Orchestral Society in the big music-room at half-past eight to-night. Miss Clifford requests particularly that all members of the Society shall be present. Those of you who are members are excused attendance at chapel to-night, and are granted half an hour's extension of your usual bedtime in order that you may attend. Members must please put all books and needlework away in their lockers before leaving their sitting-rooms to go to the meeting, as it is likely to be a long one, and the lights downstairs will probably be out before it is over. That is all, girls. Philippa, you may go. Yes, matron, what is it? Do you want to speak to me?" For matron had appeared in the doorway of the dining-hall while the mistress was giving out the notice, and was now advancing towards the high table with a rather grim expression on her face.

"No, thank you, Miss Ross. I have come to fetch Philippa Martin. Miss Druce wishes her to go to bed early for naughtiness, and I have come to see that she goes without any loitering."

"Oh, Philippa, Philippa! You seem to be in disgrace all round to-night," said Miss Ross reproachfully. "You must go with matron, I'm afraid, now. She has not had any supper, matron, yet!"

"That won't hurt her," commented matron brutally. "It won't do her any

harm at all to go supperless to bed for once. Now, Philippa, you come along with me." And having thus made public to the whole school Pip's further disgrace, she haled the luckless Fourth Former off to the dormitory, where Pip had to undress and get into bed under her sternly watchful eye.

"And there you'll stay till the morning," said matron grimly, when at last Pip was under the bedclothes. "Don't you dare stir out of your cubicle now, when you're left alone! To make sure you don't, I think I'll lock your door on the outside."

"You needn't do that, matron! I won't go out. You can leave the door open," said Pip, hotly indignant that she should not be trusted. But matron was in no trustful mood to-night, and, heedless of Pip's indignant remonstrances, she shut and locked the door of the cubicle. All the doors of the cubicles at St. Cecilia's were provided with locks, though only matron and Miss Druce possessed keys to them.

"There! Now I know you're safe," matron said. And she stalked away down the corridor, turning off the light when she came to the end. A moment later Pip heard the door at the end of the dormitory shut, and she was left to darkness and solitude.

But not for very long! Hardly had matron's footsteps died away at one end of the dormitory than a door at the other end opened very cautiously, and a faint gleam of light from an electric pocket-torch shone through the gloom, making a little pool of light on the ceiling of Pip's cubicle.

"Has matron gone?" came a stage whisper down the dormitory, and Pip sat up in bed with a little cry of joyful welcome. She could recognize Susie's stage whisper anywhere.

"Yes, she's gone," she said in cautious tones. Then as her two friends came to a pause outside her door—for Aileen was there, too—she added:

"You can't come in though, I'm afraid, for the old beast's gone and locked the door! At least," she checked herself quickly. "I suppose I'd better say 'pig.' I'll have to try and get out of the way of saying 'beast,' I suppose."

"You do say it rather often," remarked Aileen. "I expect you'd better try and stop or you'll keep on getting into rows about it. Miss Druce is making such a dead set about our saying 'beast.'"

"Besides, if you come to think of it, pig is a much better word to use," Susie said. "Every animal's a beast—kittens, and dogs, and horses, as well as all the nasty ones. People *might* think you meant one of the nice ones if you called them a beast, but if you say pig there can't be any mistake. But what a bother that matron's locked your door! Aileen and I have brought you something to eat."

"Have you? Oh, you bricks! What is it? Can't you chuck it over the top of the door?"

"We *could*—but it's some jam tarts we coaxed out of cook. "They're rather crumbly. I'm afraid chucking them over will spoil them," Aileen said doubtfully.

"Go into Sheila's cubie and stand on her bed, I'll climb on my wash-stand and you can hand them over to me," ordered Pip, scrambling out of bed in order to carry out her share in the operation. "It's ripping of you to have brought me something to eat. I'm absolutely starving. I shouldn't have been able to sleep a single wink the whole night through for hunger, if you hadn't, I'm sure."

The cubicles were formed by stout wooden partitions, which, although they were built down into the floor, did not quite reach up to the ceiling. There would have been plenty of room to have pushed a paper parcel over the top to the prisoner if the top of the partition could have been reached. But unluckily, the partitions were high and none of the three was particularly tall. Although Pip climbed on to the back of her wash-stand, and although Susie balanced a chair precariously on Sheila Morris's bed and stood on tiptoe upon it with Aileen supporting her as best she could from below, neither of the two little girls could reach quite to the top. It seemed as though Pip would either have to remain hungry or else risk the crumbling of the jam tarts.

"It would be an awful pity if they did crumble. Cook's jam tarts are such lovely puffy things," Pip said regretfully. Then a sudden idea struck her.

"Why, of course! How stupid we are! You can shove it through the window. If you lean out of Sheila's window and I lean out of mine, I'm sure we'll be able to reach," she cried.

This plan proved quite feasible. The two windows were within reach of one another, and soon Pip, cosily tucked up in a blanket, was sitting on the window-sill of her

cubicle devouring cook's crumbly jam tarts, while Susie and Aileen leant out of Sheila's window and watched her by the light of the electric torch with sympathizing eyes.

"Jolly good!" said Pip, as she finished the last crumb. "You were angels to bring them to me! I hope you won't either of you get into any row about it. Don't you think you'd better clear out now? Sheila would kick up no end of a fuss if she happened to come up and catch you in her cubie."

"It's all right, Sheila's in at the orchestra meeting," Susie told her. "We watched her go across to the music-room before we came up. She won't be out from that for ages and ages. They're going to discuss the end of term breaking-up party as well as have their usual practice. That's why they're excused Chapel to-night."

"Oh, of course! I forgot the orchestra meeting," said Pip. Then another idea came to her.

"I say, if Sheila's out of the way it would be a jolly good opportunity to do something to pay her out," she said.

"Is there anything we could do, though?" said Susie doubtfully, not altogether attracted by the thought of trying to pay out a prefect.

"I know something," said Pip promptly; and with a naughty little chuckle, she unfolded a plan which caused Aileen to give an exclamation of horror, and made even Susie utter a protest.

"Oh, but we'd get into such an awful row if we did that, Pip," she remonstrated. "The prefects would be absolutely wild about it. I don't believe such a thing's ever been done before to a prefect."

"We shouldn't get into a row unless we were caught," said Pip.

"But how could we do it without being caught?" argued Susie. "They're bound to make inquiries, and it's sure to come out. If they can't find out any other

"Clinging tightly to the woodwork with one hand, she reached out gro; ingly towards Sheila's window with the other" (p. 26)

way, they'll ask us all in turn if we'd anything to do with it. And then what could we say?"

Pip was silent a moment. Then she gave another impish little laugh.

"*I* could do it quite safely. They wouldn't be very likely to ask me, for they all know I was sent early to bed to-night. How could I have done it when I was locked up in my cubicle?" she asked.

"What do you mean?" said Susie.

"Why, I mean that I should have a jolly good ali—ali—what d'you call it? The thing burglars try to have when they're found out? You know—something to prove that they couldn't have been there because they were somewhere else, when they really were there all the time. Well, I should have that—for matron could prove that I was locked up in my cubicle so that I couldn't possibly have got out and done it."

"I don't understand—what do you mean?" asked Susie in perplexity, while Aileen added:

"You are locked up in your cubicle, aren't you? How can you possibly go and do it to-night?"

"I may be locked up—but that doesn't necessarily mean that I can't get out," said Pip, grinning at her chums' perplexity. Though she couldn't see much of their faces in the torch-light, she could hear the bewilderment in their voices. "Where grub can go, I guess I can go, too—through the window!"

"Pip! No! You don't really mean to climb out by the window. Oh, you can't. You mustn't! You'll fall!" cried Aileen in horror.

"No, I shan't! I've got a jolly good head for climbing, as you know," Pip reassured her. "I never thought of it before—never had any reason to, since this is the first time I've ever been locked in—but it will be perfectly easy to get on to Sheila's window-sill from mine, and then I can slip down and take my revenge upon her while she's in at orchestra meeting, and be back in bed again, with any luck, before anybody discovers I've gone."

"But, Pip, suppose you slipped? It's an awful way to fall," Susie said.

"I shan't slip. I shall hold tight to the framework of one window till I've got a good grip of the other," Pip said easily. "Matron told me I wasn't to leave my cubicle till the morning; but I don't mind disobeying her in the least about that. I offered her my parole and she wouldn't take it, but went and locked the door, mean old b—I mean pig! Just wait a minute while I get into some clothes. It will be easier to do it in proper things, and safer, too, in case I meet anyone in the corridors. I don't think I'm likely to do that, though. People don't wander about the corridors much at this time of the night, and, besides, you two can scout ahead of me and make sure that the coast is clear. You mustn't actually come and help me do it, of course, for you won't have the ali-thing in case they start asking awkward questions. But it won't hurt if you just keep *cave* for me."

While she was talking she was hastily discarding her nightclothes and slipping into her ordinary everyday garments. In a few minutes she was ready, except for her shoes. Shoes she would not need, she decided. She would go more quietly and stealthily in her stockinged feet. Then, with a warning to Susie and Aileen to stand clear and give her room in which to land, she climbed out upon the outside sill of her window, and, clinging tightly to the woodwork with one hand, she reached out gropingly towards Sheila's window with the other.

(To be continued)

Read

MRS. BAILLIE REYNOLDS'

GREAT NEW SERIAL STORY

"HIS SECOND VENTURE"

Now appearing in THE QUIVER

How to Make a Wild Flower Collection

by Squirrel

LET me say, first of all, how glad I am to be back in the pages of LITTLE FOLKS. I have been very busy the last few months on other work, but now I am free again to conduct your Nature Club, and I am looking forward eagerly to hearing from Club readers again.

I want this month to talk on how to make a collection of wild flowers.

A Hundred to Choose From

Over a hundred different species of wild flowers will be in bloom in May. They will not all be out on the first of the month, but quite a number of them will be, and as the days advance more and more will appear. So now is the time to begin to look for them, and learn their names and find out something about their wonderful little lives.

The best way to do this is to make a collection of them. Of course, you can learn their names by simply gathering bunches of them and taking them home to decorate your rooms. But that is wasteful. It means that you pluck a great many and throw them away when they wither, and when they are all crowded together in a bunch you are not likely to see more than the blossoms, and that means that you would never discover many interesting species.

Besides, there are large numbers of wild flowers that are not suitable for decoration, and if you are gathering for this purpose you will pass them by.

Photo: H. Bastin

White Dead Nettle: a good plant with which to experiment

A Friendly Reminder

On the other hand, if you make a collection you will come to know each species well, and every one you preserve will be a friendly reminder for the rest of your days of some interesting ramble or holiday. Besides, it will be a record which you will be able to compare with those of your friends, and when you can do this the hobby will mean ten times more to you than it did before.

Be Prepared

Before you begin to bring home specimens you ought to be prepared to deal with them, so that no time will be lost in making ready when you take them out of your collecting tin. For this purpose you require two kinds of paper—namely, a special drying paper to be used when pressing the plants, and strong cartridge paper on which to mount them when they are thoroughly dry. Both kinds should be 16 inches long by 10 inches broad. You can buy both cut to this size at any naturalist's shop, but you could probably buy them more cheaply at a stationer's in a larger size, 16½ inches by 22½ inches, and then cut them to suit your-

self. At any rate, you could get the cartridge paper there, but some stationers might not understand what you meant by drying paper, and might try to sell you blotting-paper instead. You must never use blotting-paper for this purpose. It is much too soft, and when it is wet it will stick to the plants and come to pieces in your hands. The special drying paper is much stronger, and though it may cost a shilling or two at first, it will last for ever, because after each use it can quite easily be dried, and then it is as good as before.

A Cheaper Way

If you do not care to spend money on it to begin with, you could cut up old news-

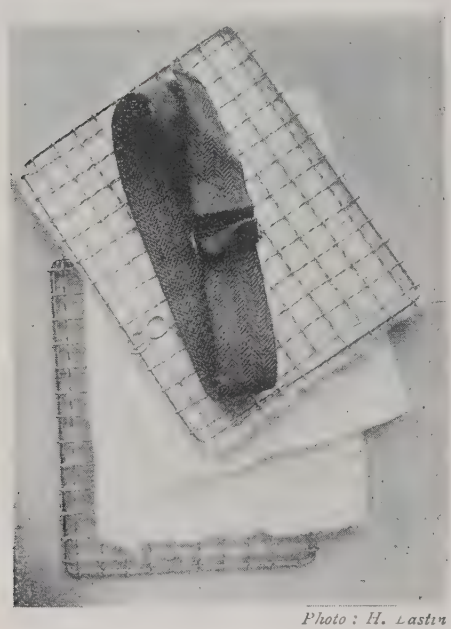


Photo : H. Lastin

An admirable type of Plant Press in which the specimens are sandwiched between sheets of absorbent cotton wool, etc

papers to the required size, and you would find that this would serve your purpose very well. But for mounting you must have the cartridge paper, because, besides being strong and durable, it is stiff and therefore does not double back when you hold it up by one end. That means that you can take a sheet in each hand and compare the plants on them without the trouble of having continually to keep them supported, and so without any danger of the dried plants becoming cracked through being bent by a drooping mount.

For Mounting

Again, in order to use the drying paper, you must have two stout boards between which to press the plants in order to squeeze their juices into the paper. Strong wire frames are still better because they allow the moisture to evaporate more readily. And for mounting you require some transparent gummed paper.

And, above all, you must have a good wild flower book to enable you to recognize the plants you bring home. A very useful one is "How to Find and Name Wild Flowers," by Thomas Fox (Cassell; price 2s. 6d.).

Beginning to Collect

When you have made these preparations, you may begin to collect. I suggest that you should first, however, make some experiments in pressing and mounting a few very common plants. You must have these in any case, however well you may know them, because no collection would be complete without them.

Go out into the nearest meadow, and gather a few specimens of the three common buttercups. It is quite easy to recognize them, though very few people seem to know them. The meadow buttercup has smooth round stems, and the other two have grooved stems. But of these two the bulbous buttercup has its sepals bent back till they are touching the stalk, and the creeping buttercup has long runners which it thrusts out among the grass so that they may take root and form new plants.

Choosing Specimens

In choosing specimens you must be sure that you take only those that show the plant in its most perfect state. The meadow buttercup, for example, has two kinds of leaves. Those on the lower part of the stalk are large, and have from three to seven lobes, each of which is divided into three lobes with deeply toothed edges. The upper leaves are not so much cut up, and their divisions are narrower. So it will be necessary for you to have a specimen showing both kinds. The best way to do this is to take a flowering stalk with one of the smaller leaves, and cut a larger leaf separately from the lower part of the same plant, and then mount them together on the same sheet.

Again, it is possible to find a creeping buttercup without its runners. Such a

specimen would not be suitable for your collection. You should choose a plant with at least one runner so as to show the true habit of the species.

When you have brought your specimens home you should press them as soon as possible, for the sooner they are done the less likely they are to lose colour.

To do this you should first place several sheets of drying paper on one of the pressing boards. On this pad lay out one of your specimens in the position in which you intend to mount it when it is dry. After making sure that none of the leaves or petals are doubled or twisted, cover it with another pad of drying paper, and then lay out another specimen. And so on till all your specimens are arranged as you wish them. Then place a covering pad on the last one and the second pressing board on the top. Above this add some heavy books or other weights, so arranged that the pressure will be even on all parts of the pile.

A Delicate Operation

Next day you must change the drying paper. Place fresh sheets in position as

Photo : H. Bastin

This photo of a plant (the common Bird's Foot Trefoil) should be spread out on the sheet of drying paper, each little stem and leaflet receiving individual attention before pressure is brought to bear

The common wood Spurge, a well-known early spring plant. This photo shows how the essential parts of a large tall-growing plant may, by a few deft "snips," be reduced to the scale adopted for mounting paper

before, and then carefully transfer the plants to them. This is a very delicate operation. You should not attempt to pick the plant off the paper with your fingers. Raise a little piece of it with a pair of fine forceps, and then slip a thin paper-knife under it. If you do this you will avoid all risk of damaging your specimens. Then, while the press is doing its work, you can dry the old sheets in readiness for the following day, by spreading them out in the sun or before the fire. This process must be repeated for several days in succession, and then gradually the changes may be made at longer intervals. The drying should be complete in a week, or a little more. You will know that your specimens are quite ready for mounting when they no longer stick to the drying paper. They can then be taken in the fingers and handled without risk of damage.

All you have to do now is to place them in position on sheets of cartridge paper, and fix them there by means of tiny strips of transparent gum paper stretched across the stalks and firmly stuck down on either side.

Names, Please

At the foot of the mount you should write your name, the name of the plant, the name of the place where you found it, the date on which you plucked it, and the habitat in which it was growing; that is, meadow or roadside, sandy or clayey soil, and so on. In fact, this information ought to be attached to the plant from the beginning, because otherwise, when you are changing the drying papers, two plants of one species may get misplaced, and you may afterwards label them wrongly.

At first you may have some failures, but by experimenting with the commonest plants your disappointments will not be so great as if you had spoilt a rare one. And you can try again and again till you feel confident of success. Then you can go out and begin your collection in earnest.

In order to do this you will require a vasculum. That is a tin about 16 inches long in which to carry home your specimens. It should have a lid on the side, so that you may place the plants in it without crushing or crumpling them, and should have a strap so that you may carry it on your shoulder.

Keeping the Plants Cool

This tin hanging from your shoulder is exposed to the full glare of the sun, and on hot days it will become like a little oven. At the end of such a day you will find if you open your tin that all your specimens are limp and look miserable, and you will probably pop them into a vase containing water to revive them. It is not wise to do that. If you leave them in the tin overnight they will have revived by the morning. You can help to keep the plants cool by lining the tin with newspaper before you start, for paper is a non-conductor of heat, which means that heat cannot readily pass through it.

When drying flowers with thick heads, like dandelions and daisies, you may press the stalks and squash the heads. To avoid this you should build up pads of drying paper or newspaper round the plants so that the outer petals may rest on them while the thick centres lie in the hollow between them.

Plants with thick, fleshy stems are not easy to dry successfully, partly because of their juiciness, but more because they continue to grow after they are plucked, and even while they are being pressed. It is best to dip the stalks of such plants in boiling water before beginning to dry them. By doing this you kill the plant, and so prevent it from growing and losing its colour.

When choosing specimens you should take those only with undamaged leaves and petals if you can find them. That is often difficult, but you can usually make a specimen perfect by removing a withered or a grub-eaten leaf.

Drawings or Photographs

Another way to make a hobby of wild flowers is to do drawings of your specimens. In this way you can preserve the colours and the forms of your plants, and provide yourself with charming records which will be more pleasing to look upon in years to come than pressed and withered specimens.

Still another way is to take photographs of the plants as they are growing. In this way you can make a wonderful collection of beautiful things without destroying any of them. But, of course, you cannot by this means preserve the colours unless you can do colour photography.

WILD FLOWER COLLECTION COMPETITION

I want all readers of this number—whether members of the Nature Club or not—to make a Wild Flower Collection and send it along to me.

See full particulars in "Competition Corner"

A SERIAL FOR VERY LITTLE FOLKS

THE ADVENTURES of BINGO DOG

By CONSTANCE EGAN

NO. 1.—BINGO RUNS AWAY AND MEETS TISHY

WHEN he was very, very young you thought he was going to be a nice well-bred fox terrier. When he was three months old you knew he would never be mistaken for anything but a mongrel. When he was six months old he was a perfect terror.

"He's no sort of dog at all," said the man. "Just look at him. Three sizes too large for a fox terrier, with a tail like a greyhound, ears like a foxhound, and a square nose like no dog that ever happened!"

"His looks wouldn't matter," said the woman, "if only he wasn't so big and so troublesome. He's miles too big for a house dog."

"And he's not a bit of good as a watch dog," said the man.

"And he's a terrible nuisance," went on the woman. "Only this morning he wagged his tail in the parlour and sent my best vase flying off the what-not—smashed to smithereens it was."

"We must get rid of him," said the man firmly.

"No one would have a dog like that, at a gift," cried his wife.

"He must go to the Dogs' Home, then," said the man, "and we'll get another dog, a nice, well-behaved little animal."

"You're right. Bingo must go, and we'll get a dog that will stop growing when he's the right size," said the woman. "Take him to the Dogs' Home to-day, John."

"No time to-day," answered John shortly, "I'll take him to-morrow."

In this way the fate of Bingo was settled; at least it would have been settled if Bingo hadn't been quietly chewing up one of his mistress's green morocco slippers under the dining-room table.

At the words "Dogs' Home" he pricked up his ears and stopped chewing; the slipper lay a wet shapeless mass between his front paws.

Bingo Dog listened intently, head on one side, ears cocked.

"Dogs' Home"! His nose twitched nervously. He wasn't going to any old Dogs' Home, not if he could possibly help it.

Now, it doesn't matter being taken

to a Dogs' Home if you're lost, or a decent-looking dog. Someone is sure to come along in a day or two and buy you. But Bingo knew *he'd* never be bought. Not with that tail and a head that didn't match his body!

"No!" he wooffed, "the Dogs' Home is no sort of a home for a fellow like me. I'm off." And off he was, all-in-a-minute. Just like that.

It was easy enough to run away. The front door was open, the garden gate ajar; he had no collar on, so there was no chance of anybody bringing him back to the man and his wife and "Laburnum Cottage."

Bingo streaked down the road like mad, ears back, tail between legs, and in his mouth he carried the chewed remains of his late mistress's green morocco slipper.

"'You look pretty blown. Been stealing the Sunday joint?'"

It's a breathless business running for all you're worth with a green morocco slipper in your mouth and the fear of the Dogs' Home at your heels; so that three streets away from Laburnum Cottage Bingo paused, dropped the slipper and stood over it panting, his long, thin, red tongue hanging out of his mouth.

"Hello!" barked a voice, and up pranced an Irish terrier, tail awag. He was a dandy-looking fellow, a lovely goldie brown colour. "You look pretty blown. Been stealing the Sunday joint?" He eyed the mangled remains of the slipper.

"Our Sunday joint's bigger than *that*," sniffed Bingo proudly, forgetting for the moment that he had no home now, and therefore no Sunday joint. "That's a slipper."

"You'll get thrashed for chewing it up," remarked the Irishman.

"I shan't, then," snorted Bingo rudely. "I'm not going back, so there!"

"You running away, then?" asked the other with a show of interest.

"Yes," said Bingo, feeling a bit of a hero. "I'm out to find someone who wants me. My people got fed-up with me; they wanted a house dog, and I grew too big for the house, so they thought they'd take me to the Dogs' Home. But they won't. There's someone in the world wants a dog just like me, and I'm going to find them."

"Don't you believe it," laughed the Irish Terrier, showing all his white teeth in a broad grin; "nobody would want a beast like you—not with that tail and that head. Oh! my whiskers, no! The Dogs' Home's the place for *you*, old top."

"*Grrrr!*" growled Bingo, "I'll spoil your beauty for you."

The Irish Terrier bristled, and with furious barkings flew straight at Bingo.

"You mongrel!" he shouted. Next second there would have been a terrific fight if a large motor-car hadn't swung round the corner just then, and with loud hootings scattered the dogs, one to the right and one to the left. And when the car had passed, Bingo Dog saw the Irish Terrier, loudly protesting, being dragged by his collar into a garden by a small boy.

"It's all right, mother," called the boy; "it wasn't Paddy's fault. A nasty common mongrel attacked him."

Bingo picked up the green morocco slipper and trotted off.

"Nasty common mongrel indeed!" he growled. "Well, I wouldn't have *him* for a master anyway. I'd . . . I'd . . . bite him." I regret to say Bingo was *not* a perfect little gentleman.

A green morocco slipper is nice to chew and nice to sleep with, but it is *not* a meal for an outsize in puppies.

By dinner-time Bingo was very, very hungry. Then he had a bit of luck at a butcher's shop.

He slunk into the shop and nosed around the sawdust on the floor for scraps, but there weren't any. It was a most tidy butcher's shop. Poor Bingo Dog! He could smell meat, and he could see meat—rows and rows of juicy joints and inviting-looking bones—but he couldn't get a scrap! His mouth watered with longing.

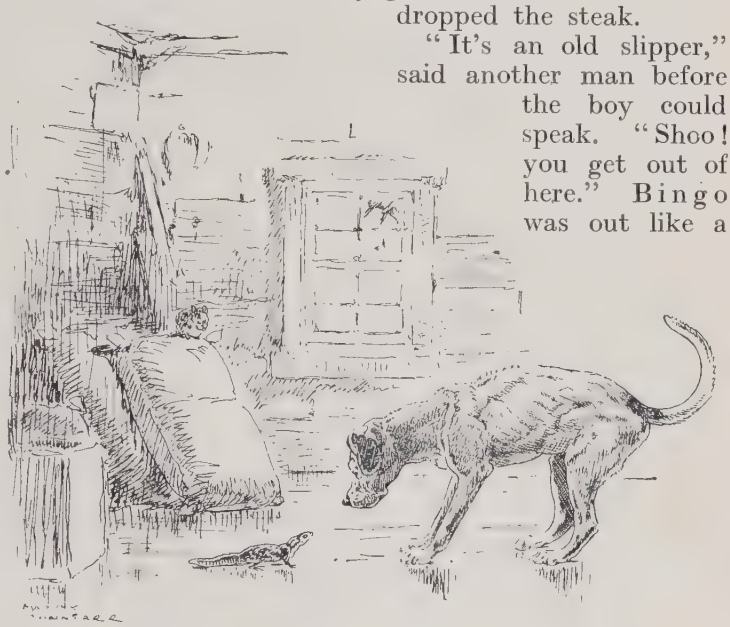
And then the unexpected and marvellous happened. A careless butcher's boy, piling his tray with joints, dropped a nice lump of steak. Quick as lightning Bingo caught it in his mouth. It was much too big to swallow whole. The butcher turned round.

"What's that dog got in his mouth?" he cried.

Quickly Bingo picked up the old slipper. This hid the steak from view.

The boy grew red, he knew he had dropped the steak.

"It's an old slipper," said another man before the boy could speak. "Shoo! you get out of here." Bingo was out like a shot and racing down the road to a quiet spot where he could enjoy his dinner in peace.



"'*Tish . . . . tishy!*' sneezed the little green lizard" (p. 34)

Drawn by Harry Rountree

Of course, I know no nice, well-brought-up dog would take meat from a butcher's shop like that, but you must remember that Bingo Dog was very, very empty, and there was no one to give him any dinner.

He ran on until he came to an empty house. Bingo pushed open the gate and trotted round to the back garden. He dropped his precious burden in the long grass and sat down and laughed! Yes, I am sorry to say Bingo was not in the least ashamed of his behaviour; on the contrary, he was proud of it.

"Oh, lumme!" he cried (Bingo Dog does use such words! But then what can you expect from an outsize

mongrel ?). "What a joke! Never had such a good catch in my life."

Without more ado he set to work and ate the steak.

"Best dinner I've had for a long time," he said, licking his lips. "This is better than Laburnum Cottage, where you couldn't wag your tail without upsetting something." Then he stretched himself out in the sun and went to sleep.

When Bingo awoke he made his plans.

"I must push on to the Big Town," said he; "there I shall find a fortune, and someone who wants a dog like me."

He looked at the green morocco slipper, and he knew it would be easier to get along without it. All the same he hated parting with it. Bingo loved the old green slipper same as you love your oldest and dearest toy. But he was a sensible dog. He dug a hole in an old potato bed and buried it.

"I'm going to seek my fortune," he told it, in muttered growlings and snortings, as he raked the earth over the spot, "and when I've made my fortune and found someone who wants a dog like me, I'll come and dig you up, old thing." With that he trotted out of the garden and off down the high road which led to the Big Town.

It was fine fun. Bingo's long legs carried him over the ground at a great pace.

Every now and again he stopped to play with some other dog; he chased two cats; found a nice bone round by a back door, and stole the cat's milk outside another back door. Disgraceful Bingo! At night time he came to the Big Town.

The night-watchman at a big warehouse down by the river gave him some scraps for dinner and let him sleep on some sacking in a shed belonging to the warehouse.

"I wish I hadn't buried the old slipper," he murmured as he curled himself round and went to sleep.

Bingo Dog awoke early next morning and heard a strange little noise.

"*Tish . . . tish . . . tishy!*"

"What's that?" he barked, on his feet in an instant! (Who said Bingo was no good as a watchdog?)

"*Tish . . . tish . . . tishy!*" It was like a tiny, funny little sneeze. Bingo Dog was all alert. He cocked his ears and turned his head in the direction the sound came from.

"*Tish . . . tish . . . tishy!*" From behind a full sack crawled a little green lizard. Bingo Dog barked his delight. He didn't know in the least what it was, but it reminded him of his old green slipper before it was chewed.

"What are you?" he yapped.

"*Tish . . . tishy!*" sneezed the little green lizard. It had nibbled at one of those sacks and found it was pepper, and the pepper had made it sneeze.

"You've said that before, old bean," remarked Bingo. "I know you're Tishy all right. But where'd you come from, funny?"

"*Tish . . .* India!" gasped the lizard. Bingo danced and pranced round barking excitedly.

This brought one of the warehousemen to the spot.

"Here, you get out of this, you," cried the man. And by his look Bingo knew he'd have to go. But not without his new-found friend, so like his old green slipper! He picked up the little green lizard in his mouth and bolted.

Where did Bingo and Tishy go to? Read another adventure next month

The Tam-o'-Shanter Kid

An Adventure Tale
By
Mary Mahon

MARGUERITE burst through the garden gate, flew up the path, lost her footing on the slippery cottage doorstep and fell flat on her face among the feet of her brothers and sisters, gasping with the little breath she had left:

"Oh—oh, Louise, pick me up! Oh, Tammas, she—she—she's there again! Oh, pick me up, do!"

Thomas and Louise did as they were asked. The twins—they were building a snow-man, who was to look in at the kitchen window and frighten Nanny—stopped work, it is true; but it was not Marguerite's fall that moved them. She was always doing it.

"*Who's* there?" asked Thomas.

"Oo!" yelled Jack at the top of his voice. "She means the Tammysanter Kid!"

"The what? Oh, don't all talk at once!" cried Louise. "Shut up, Jack and Jill. Go on, Margot."

From which you will gather that Louise was the elder sister.

"It began when you and Tammas were at Granny's," explained Marguerite. "There's a girl—a horrid kid in a red tam—always hanging about Mr. Robarts's wood-yard."

"Who is she?"

"Only one of those swanky kids staying at the Bay—we've seen her there."

"Yes, and we hunt her," said Jack with satisfaction.

"There's kind of feud between us now; it's awfully exciting. Do come on!"

"She's a chespasser," remarked Jack.

"Suts tseek!" murmured Jill.

Thomas roared.

"Well, it is cheek," retorted Margot, fidgeting with impatience. "She's no business there . . . and every time we chase her I fall down and hurt myself."

"That's your look-out. Mr. Robarts didn't ask you to hunt people round his wood-yard."

"But still, we ought to turn trespassers out, especially as he's a friend of Daddy's," said Louise, who liked a fight. "He can't watch the yard himself; he's in London, and the house is shut up."

"Come on, we'll play Cavaliers and Roundheads with her!"

"Five great Roundheads after one poor hunted Cavalier!" groaned Thomas, who knew his sister was a red-hot Royalist.

"Poor fing! It's not fair!" protested the twins in chorus. They always sided with the oppressed.

"Silly gooses!" cried Louise. "*We're* the Cavaliers. She's only a crop-eared knave skulking in the halls of our ancestors. Forward!"

And forward it was.

They ran across the road and past the "Trespassers" notice-board into the yard.

"There she is!" said Margot; and the Cavaliers came to a stand by a neat pile of logs stacked high above their heads, on the top of which the crop-eared knave sprawled at full length, eyeing them watchfully. All they could see of her was a round, rosy face, two brown hands propping her chin, and the red tam rakishly cocked on one side.

"Hallo! There's some more of you to-day!" remarked the enemy with annoying composure.

Louise tried to wither her with a glance, but it is difficult to "wither" a person who is looking down at you—and enjoying it. Louise grew cross.

"You're trespassing," she said shortly.

"And we're going to stop it. If you come here again we shall tell Mr Robarts. He's a Justice of the Peace," added Margot with relish.

"Yes, I know," replied the little girl. She seemed about to add more, but changed her mind and waved her legs in the air instead.

Louise gasped at her audacity.

"But—I say, you'll be prosecuted!"

"Trespassers can't be prosecuted," said the enemy coolly, and Margot jumped.

"There! She's always saying that!" she cried. "Can't they, indeed? Why, there's the notice-board staring her in the face!"

"Can't you wead?" piped Jill.

The little girl grinned.

"Rather! *Can you?*" she inquired pointedly.

Jill turned very red and retired behind Louise, but her twin was furious.

"You're a skookincwopper knave, and pwesently we'll hang you on a twee, and the c-c-cwows 'll scwatch your eyes out! Howwid fing, you are!" shouted Jack, stuttering with rage.

"You nasty little boy! Is it a game?" asked the enemy. She got up, showing herself a sturdy, small girl with long legs that looked as if they could run and jump. "I'm sorry I can't play with you," she said politely, "but—I heard you were down here after measles. It was the German kind, wasn't it?"

For a moment the Cavaliers were struck speechless with indignation. It had not been the German kind, but the suggested insult was unbearable.

"We'll show you!" cried Margot, and made a dash at the logs; whereupon the little girl hopped off on to a pile of brushwood, took a flying leap, scooted across the yard and disappeared through an open door into the barn; and the chase began.

Louise and Marguerite left the twins to Thomas; and such a dance as the enemy led the two girls—all among the rustling straw stacks, up and down ladders, in and out of lofts, through dim, strange corners where the children had never penetrated before. Once she lay along a great beam over their heads and gave them a lecture on the English law as regards trespassing. It seemed that she knew all about it—or thought she did. In the end they tracked her into the outhouse beyond, but when they arrived it was empty. The door was bolted on the inside, but the windows were not impossible, and one of the wooden shutters was swinging open. The Cavaliers were driven to the humiliating conclusion that this Roundhead knew rather more about their "ancestral halls" than they did.

"I should just like to get even with that Tam-o'-Shanter Kid before we go home," said Louise next morning.

Margot put her head out of the window and drew it in again with a start.

"She's there again! I can see her tammy," she declared excitedly. "Look here, let's be cautious this time and take her by surprise. 'Sh! Not a word!"

They sallied out, therefore, in what they took to be dead silence, and crept along by the wall. At the entrance to the yard Thomas suddenly straightened up and burst out laughing.

"She's diddled us nicely this time! It's only her red tammy stuck on the notice-board!"

"There's a paper pinned to it," exclaimed Louise. "Can you reach it, Tammas?"

He could not, and had to climb the post.

"*She* climbed it, you bet," said Margot bitterly.

"It's a poem," said Thomas, looking at the paper he held.

"Let's see!" cried everyone; and, standing on each other's toes and peeping over and under each other's arms, they read as follows:

I am going to London to-day;
When you get this I shall be far away.
To escape from you was not very hard—
I hope you like playing in Daddy's wood-yard.

Yours afecshuntly,
SAIDIE ROBARTS.

P.S.—Trespassers can't be prosecuted. Daddy says so.

The children stood still and looked at one another and kicked the grass at the foot of the post. Their breath rose in clouds on the frosty air. Presently Louise folded up the paper and the tam-o'-shanter, and the whole party walked slowly back to the cottage.

Thomas said with a chuckle:

"Looks as if the crop-eared knave had scored a point!"

Nobody else said anything at all.

Tell the Grown-ups to read

"THE THREE HOSTAGES"

the latest and greatest Mystery Story of

JOHN BUCHAN

Started in "THE GRAPHIC" on April 5

TWO LIVELY PETS!

How would you like a couple of pets like this? They are two lion cubs, born in the private Zoo of the Mayor of Maidstone (who is seen holding his treasures). I think I would rather have a kitten, wouldn't you?

DANGEROUS WORK

An interesting stage in the erection of a viaduct over the Battle River, in the Canadian Rockies

Building the Big Bridges

By H. J. SHEPSTONE

FEW men have more romantic stories to tell than the bridge-builder. He is busy to-day throwing his aerial pathways of steel across mighty rivers and broad estuaries. What makes his work so difficult are the many obstacles which he has to overcome.

The modern bridge has to be strong enough to carry express trains and other heavy traffic. It means that the foundations must be very strong. To secure these he has to build up massive piers from the bed of the river; and this means a battle against tides and currents. Then he has to take into consideration the force of the winds and gales, and a hundred other points.

Bridges in the Making

We are going to hear a great deal about big bridges in the future, for quite a number are to be erected. At Sydney, in Australia, a magnificent steel structure is to be thrown across the famous harbour there It is to carry four railway tracks and two roadways for vehicular traffic. Its erection is expected to occupy four years and to cost £4,200,000. Then our own Government, in order to find work for the unemployed, propose to build a road bridge across the Firth of Forth, in Scotland, close to the present Forth Bridge. It will be 9,000 feet in total length. In a like manner another structure is to be built across the Firth of Tay, near where the famous Tay Bridge now stands.

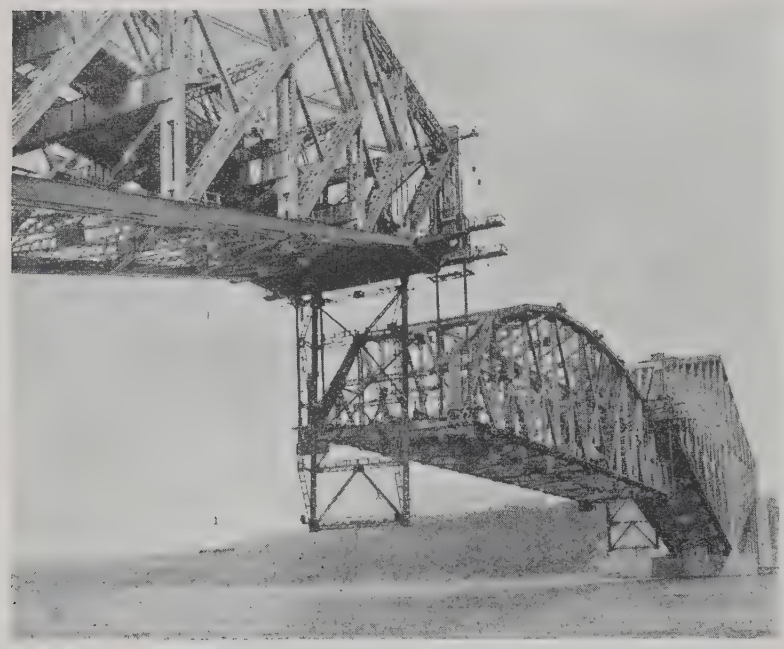
We get an idea of what it means to build one of these giant crossings by noting what happened during the erection of the famous Quebec Bridge, across the River St. Lawrence, in Canada. It possesses the widest of bridge spans, namely, 1,800 feet—that is to say, the central piers carrying the bridge are spaced that distance apart.

When some 18,000 tons of steel had been erected, like a great arm projecting over the river, it suddenly fell, carrying 74 men to their death. The crash of the fall was heard distinctly in Quebec, six miles away. It took eighteen months to clear the mass of broken and twisted metal from the bottom of the river, and it was accomplished by blowing it up with dynamite.

Not to be outdone the engineers set about building another bridge which should be heavier and stronger than the one that collapsed. As the months went by so the great structure rose, the two main columns towering over 300 feet into the air, columns from which radiate huge girders to which, in turn, are bolted the innumerable pieces of steel that carry the roadway. Many of these pieces weigh 50 tons, and they are bolted together by "pins." These latter alone weigh several tons!

Another Failure

So the work progressed, the great arms gradually growing outwards, until there was a gap in the centre of 640 feet. It was decided to erect this span separately and lift it bodily into position. It was accord-



Raising the centre span of the Quebec Bridge. It weighs 5,000 tons

ingly built and floated to the site on scows or barges. Quite a number of distinguished persons had been invited to watch the lifting of the span which would mark the completion of the structure. Hardly had the great steel lifting chains raised the heavy load off the scows when the links in one of the chains snapped, with the result that the mass of steel buckled up and fell into the river. Another span had to be built, and this was successfully raised. It took the engineers sixteen years to build this bridge, and it called for the sacrifice of over a hundred brave lives. It contains 66,480 tons of steel held together in place by eight million rivets.

A Dangerous Work

One has only to look at our illustration showing the erection of a viaduct over the Battle River, in the Canadian Rockies, to see the dangerous nature of the work. At the end of the trestle is the traveller. This is a very ingenious contrivance, and by its aid a steel structure can be put up without the use of scaffolding. It takes the heavy girders and swings them into position, holding them there until the men have bolted them into place. Standing on these swinging members of steel, over a rushing stream, particularly on windy days, is nerve trying. The men must be ever on the alert, possess a clear head, and know something about steel.

The story of our bridges is full of romance and daring. In the erection of the Saltash Bridge, over the River Tamar, which separates Devon from Cornwall, the men had several narrow escapes from drowning. The foundations of the piers were obtained by sinking huge caissons—a kind of box without bottom or top — in midstream, in which, provided with compressed air, the men toiled for two years. In the winter storms the unwieldy cylinder rocked so violently, despite its heavy weights and chains, that leakages occurred. It was a case then of scrambling out of the caisson, and getting ashore as quickly as possible. One foreman records how the water poured in so rapidly that he was up to his neck before the last man had ascended the ladder. When the top was gained, the rolling and pitching was so violent that the men could hardly maintain their footing. Yet they had to remain there, with the waves dashing over them, for over an hour before they were rescued, their own boat having been dashed to pieces against the sides of the caisson. The Saltash Bridge is 2,200 feet long, the railway track being carried 110 feet above the level of the water.

Some Magnificent Bridges

Over the Menai Strait, which separates the island of Anglesey from Carnarvonshire, we have some magnificent bridges. There is the Suspension Bridge, which the Ministry of Transport has decided to rebuild, as it is not considered strong enough for modern motor traffic. When the first chain of this bridge was drawn across the Strait half a dozen workmen dashed forward in a mad, perilous race, to see who would be the first to negotiate

the stream by the new swaying aerial pathway. The last chain of this bridge was raised to its position to the strains of the National Anthem, played by a band on a temporary platform on the centre span.

The Britannia Bridge over this waterway consists of great steel tubes carried on massive brick piers They were built complete on shore and raised into position, an inch or two at a time, by powerful jacks—no mean feat, seeing they turned the scale at 900 tons. When one of the tubes had been raised to a height of 30 feet one of the hydraulic presses broke, and the tube fell a distance of some seven inches on the packings which had been built up underneath it.

So small a fall would appear to the uninitiated to be of slight consequence, but the momentum acquired by the 900 tons of iron grew, even with so small a distance, to such proportions as to crumple up solid castings weighing tons as if they had been mere biscuit boxes. "Thank God," wrote Mr. Clark, the engineer-in-chief, to Stephenson, "that you have been so obstinate; for if this accident had occurred with no bed for the end of the tube to fall on, it would have been lying across the bottom of the Strait."

The Great Forth Bridge

The mightiest of all bridges in this country is the Forth Bridge, which crosses the estuary of that name in Scotland. It boasts of the second longest span in the world—namely, 1,700 feet—contains over 50,000 tons of steel, fastened together by 6,500,000 rivets. Another great bridge is that over the Firth of Tay. The first bridge thrown across the estuary here collapsed, carrying a train and sixty-seven passengers to their death. The failure was due to faulty design and workmanship, and when the present edifice was put up every care was taken to erect a structure that would not only carry the necessary weight, but withstand winds and storms. It is one of the longest crossings in the world, being just over two miles in length.

The Inspector's Walk on the Quebec Bridge, 300 feet above the waterway

PETER'S PIGTAIL

By Alice M. Angus

Older readers will remember Alice Angus as a former Silver Medallist, and a new contributor to LITTLE FOLKS.

Here is another story by one of "our own" writers.

PETER was all right, but it was the pigtail that stuck in the Lower Fourth's throat. Don't be alarmed; Peter was a girl, so the pigtail was quite natural.

"Peter Preston," read out Miss Martin at morning roll-call. Then she looked up and wrinkled her forehead until the freckles ran up under her curly cropped hair. "Is it really Peter?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Martin," murmured Peter, sidling up on her feet in the cautious sidle of a first-termer. When you've been at St. Mona's for a couple you kind of bounce up! "You see, there were six boys, and when I came Daddy said: 'Oh, call it Petronella, and if it grows up like a boy we'll call it Peter!' So it's always been Peter. . . . But I've another one," she added reluctantly; "Ponsonby."

"I think we'll call you Peter," said Miss Martin, who is a sport. She wrote it down and gave lucky Peter a lovely long, crinkly smile. We'd all of us have willingly died an inky death to have had a smile like that from Miss Martin, but the Peter person just blinked and sidled down beside her desk again.

Then we all managed to have a look at her, and we all saw the pigtail at the same moment—a fat, long, yellow fellow, dangling to her waist with coppery lights in its thick twists.

"It'll have to come off," boomed Monica, as we sat in conclave afterwards. Monica is a tall, dark-browed, hefty person with a deep note in her voice and a lot of force in her character, and all that. She's led the Lower Fourth in form matters like this since it was so high. So we sent a "round robin" to the new Peter person, requesting her to cut off the offending pigtail at her earliest possible convenience. She was in a different boarding-house or we'd have tackled her in dormer after lights out, which is always the best time to mould new girls' characters. Monica's voice is peculiarly impressive in the dark! However, we really put a lot of good writing into that "round robin," and we were literally bowled over when Peter Ponsonby Preston left a note next morning on Monica's desk:

"I like your cheek," said the note indignantly. "I'll hang on to my pigtail as long as it hangs on to me. Are there any rules against hair in this school? Excuse note, but it seems a pity to waste stamps like that. "P. PRESTON."

We gasped and looked at Monica. She seemed frightfully winded.

"The child simply doesn't understand," she exploded, waving her arms. Monica's a first-rate orator. "We'll have to explain to her. Of course I like her independent spirit and all that, and no doubt she'll take a less violent view if we put it to her plainly. What is a paltry pigtail in a great reform like this? No, it must come off!"

At recreation we gathered round Peter and explained everything to her calmly and firmly, with Monica as our mouthpiece.

We explained how all the classes in the Upper School chose one of the teachers to be their ideal, and how we'd chosen Miss Martin, the gym. mistress, who happened by great good luck to be our form-mistress as well this term.

"But," said Monica, "she doesn't seem to think much of us. Last term she practically told us that we were the worst form at gym. and sports, and that we ought to buck up. So we've made a grim compact to slog at outdoor things this year, and *to let nothing deter us.*" Monica paused for breath. "Miss Martin is engaged and going to be married at the end of the summer term, but before that we want to show her. Lilia here is going in for the swimming championship, and Daisy ought to get into the tennis team. Everyone tries. No swotting. Of course some of us had bobbed hair to start with, but the rest went and had theirs cut immediately. You can't go in for sports thoroughly if your hair's long—Miss Martin's is short. So, my child, your pigtail will have to go by the board. No pigtails this term—it isn't done. Twig now, don't you?"

We all condescended to look very persuasive.

"No," said Peter candidly, "I won't cut it off. I'll try hard at games, but I'm not going to be such an ass as to bob it just because you all do it. I wondered why you'd all got cropped hair like a string of convicts," she ended, with a grin.

Then we left Peter Preston to herself. Such absolute pig-headedness in a new girl was a bit too thick to stand.

"It's brothers," said Monica darkly. "They always get like that when they have brothers. Look at Betty Paterson in the Third. 'Member? She ran away, and came back herself 'cause she was a penny short of the train fare . . . and she had nine brothers."

Peter didn't seem to mind much. If she'd only been in our house we might have rubbed it in a bit. We did our best during class and rec. We cut out advertisements on hair-restorers and dyes and left them by her ink-well; we pulled the fat yellow thing as often as was possible; we called her the Lone Pigtail and left her strictly to herself. Peter took it pluckily. She was tall and fair and self-possessed, and worked away at her lessons steadily, breaking the rule that nobody was to swot. She did her best at games, I suppose, but her weekly exhibition at the swimming baths made us all giggle in our boxes. If she tried any stunts her cap was sure to come off, and Peter sniffed for a week afterwards with a cold caught from wet hair.

Then we forgot all about her. Break-up was approaching, and tennis, the swimming championship and the Arnold Medal for the fifty yards' race filled our heads. We'd worked so hard that there was a—a gasping tension those days. We did so want to show ripping Miss Martin what stuff we were made of. And when Lilia, who everybody said was almost sure for the swimming championship, lost by half an inch we nearly howled. We hadn't any particularly good sprinters in the Fourth, so we didn't expect to do anything in that

"Peter was everywhere at once, the pigtail performing loops in the air behind her" (p. 44)

Drawn by Frank Gillet

line. We laid all our hopes on Daisy Milne, whom Miss Martin had already chosen for the tennis team. Then she went and sprained her ankle in the racing a week before the match!

"Oh, Miss Martin," we groaned, "isn't there any hope? Perhaps she may be able to run about a bit at the week's end."

"No, 'fraid not," said Miss Martin briskly. "But there are plenty of good substitutes, you know. I'll be able to tell you to-morrow."

Which was scant comfort for us!

Next morning, when she told us that Peter Preston was to play in Lilia's place, we goggled at the blackboard. Peter flushed a slow pink and ducked behind her desk lid.

The match day came round. The sky was a deep, hot blue; the tennis courts green and glimmering. St. Margaret's broad straw sailors and our white hats looked like a frill of big daisies as we clustered round expectantly. Peter, pink and flurried as a rose rambler in her white, straight frock, came running up rather gingerly to where we squatted in a knot. I handed her up her hat, and Lilia, who must have been feeling sore about the swimming, said a stupid thing.

"The Lone Pigtail's afraid of getting sunstroke—its wig might fade!" she remarked clearly.

Peter dropped the hat as though it were a Latin grammar and turned back swiftly, cheeks flaming. I called out "Good luck!" feebly, but the rest were glaring at that retreating pigtail, corn-coloured and impudent, and the words stuck in their throats.

We had to own she played a splendid game, steady and yet swift. We had never really had much chance of seeing her play before, each separate house having its own courts, and gave her grudging praise. Her partner, Millicent, played erratically, but Peter was everywhere at once, the pigtail performing loops in the air behind her.

"It'll hit her in the face yet," predicted Monica darkly. But it didn't, and Peter walked off to a clatter of clapping. St. Mona's had carried off the championship! When she reached the tent we saw her sway suddenly and a flutter of white frocks closed in round her.

"Sunstroke!" said Miss Martin, as she ran past us up to the house.

After that we didn't see any more of Peter. Term broke up the following week, and Matron refused to let anyone see her, or I expect some of us would have swallowed our pride and gone. We were very much engaged in buying a wedding present for Miss Martin. A sixty-five shilling "Demon" racket was what we had been aiming at, but when funds were counted we were about ten shillings short. And everyone was stony, of course. We worked like niggers, but we couldn't raise a shilling.

"We'll have to express ourselves in a brush-and-comb bag or something," sighed Lilia, who, as cashier, had been having a fatiguing time. We were sitting waiting for roll-call. "That 'Demon' racket's gone up the chimney. We'll buy something cheaper to-morrow——"

Millicent Mannering came flying in, flung a limp paper parcel before us, murmured something about "young Peter Preston," and evaporated again.

We clustered round Lilia as she opened it. Inside lay a fat yellow plait of hair, tied with ribbon at the end. And Matron had pinned a note to it:

"Peter Preston wants me to send this to you. The doctor said there was no real necessity to cut her hair as the fever was slight, but she insisted. She says 'it may help you out in your difficulty, and try at Dixon's, the hairdresser's.'"

We all looked anxiously at Monica.

"She's a brick!" boomed Monica.

We sold the hair, and got just enough to buy the racket. Then, in a body, we went up and sat on Peter's bed. She looked like a jolly, fair-headed boy with her cropped hair.

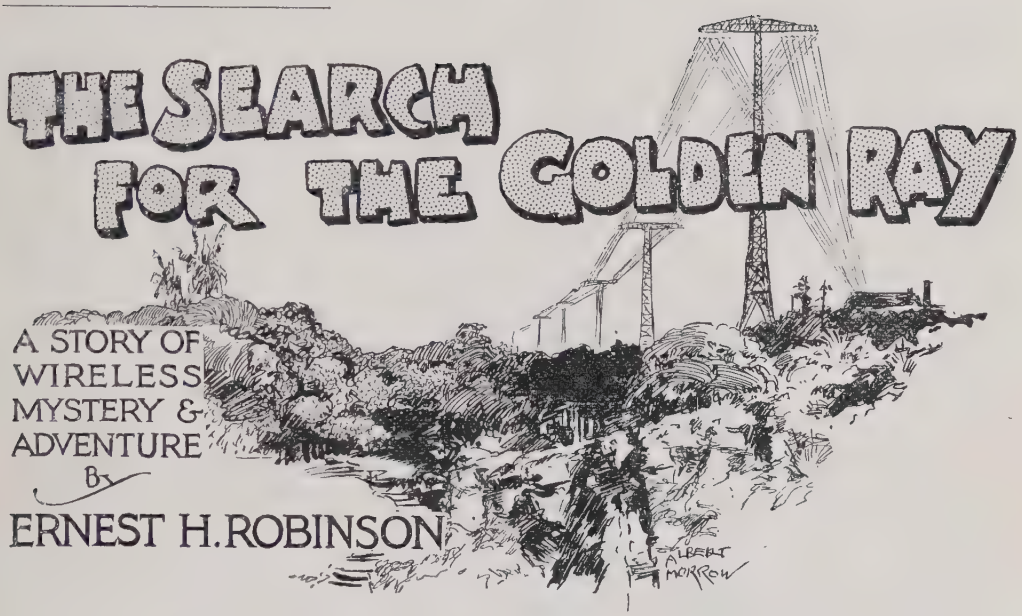
"I say, you know," said Monica in her most thrilling bass, "we've all been rotters. We want you to present this to Miss Martin for the form, and please grow a pigtail again."

Then everybody begged everybody else's pardon, and Peter gave us some tips about back-hand strokes until the bed creaked so creakily that Matron bore down on us.

But Peter hasn't grown another pigtail yet!

GRAND NEW SERIAL

THE SEARCH FOR THE GOLDEN RAY



CHAPTER I

Listening-in

"AH, this is fine! Better than broadcasting! Better than listening to the children's stories, eh, Joan?" Roger Hartley turned glowing, excited eyes to his cousin Joan, who nodded and lifted her finger, shaking it to signal him into silence.

Joan's father, Dr. Bastable, pressed his foot on a switch, like a rather large bell-push, on the floor. Immediately three big wireless valves on the table before him glowed like high-power electric lamps, and, at the same time, a small electric engine in a corner of the room began to hum a song like the drone of a small bluebottle. Then Richard Bastable, who was not a doctor of medicine but a doctor of science and a well-known wireless experimenter, spoke into a round, disc-like thing about the size of a tea plate, and-shaped something like the mouthpiece of an ordinary telephone.

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo, five-Y-emma!" he said. "Hallo! One-tock-George calling you. You are coming through very strongly now. Joan and Roger are here with me, and they send their love." Then he went on with a technical explanation of various parts of the transmitter he was using, whilst Roger listened with bated breath.

Joan was quite used to sitting in the radio-room whilst her father was transmitting and conducting his experiments; but it was a new experience for Roger. He knew quite a good deal about wireless, though, because his father had a listening set at home and he was allowed to work it. Call signs and the funny way wireless men use them, using words instead of letters so that they shall be quite clear, were no mystery to him. He knew that "one tock-George" stood for "1 T G," his uncle's call-sign, and that "5 Y M" was the call of a brother-experimenter who lived not far from London, over two hundred miles away. He had met "5 Y M," too, several times, when his father had taken him up to London, to wireless exhibitions and meetings of the Radio Society, and had simply inundated him with questions. It was wonderful to think that in that room, on the outskirts of Newquay, in Cornwall, they were in direct communication with his father's friend without any wires joining them. Though he was used to listening to broadcasting Roger could never quite get over the feeling of excitement when he was anywhere near a wireless set.

Dr. Bastable pressed the floor-switch again, and the three big valves went out, four small receiving valves glowing in their place. Immediately, from the curved horn of a big loud-speaker, the voice of "5 Y M" filled the room.

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo, one-tock-

George! Five-Y-emma answering you. Yes, I quite understand. Your new transmitter is certainly a marvel. Speech is very clear and strength louder than I have ever heard you. Tell Joan and Roger that I envy them their trip with you in your motor-yacht *Radio*. I saw Roger's father yesterday, and he told me you were taking the youngsters with you. I shall try to keep in touch with your experiments, old man, if you will let me know the hours you will be transmitting. Don't expect I shall be able to talk to you, though—haven't enough power. You start the day after to-morrow, don't you? Ask George and Joan if they'd like to hear some music. I have a new gramophone reproducer I want to test. If they'll tell me what record they'd like to hear, I'll put it on. Then I'll stand by for your report. Five-Y-emma over to one-tock-George."

"Oh, ask him to put on 'Parade of the Wooden Soldiers.' I know he has it!" cried Roger, as Dr. Bastable switched out the receiving set and brought the transmitter into play again.

"Yes, do ask him to play that," echoed Joan. "I just love that bit at the end where the soldiers all fall down."

"Did you hear what they said, old man?" asked Dr. Bastable into the microphone, and then switched in the receiving set again.

At once they heard "5 Y M's" cheery laugh.

"Yes, I heard them, all right," said the voice from the loud-speaker. "Good enough! I'll put on 'Wooden Soldiers.' Stand by a minute whilst I find it. It's somewhere on top of the pile, so I won't be long."

There was a few seconds' silence, and then they heard the click and whir of the gramophone starting up, almost as loud as though it had been in the same room. Then out of the loud-speaker came the jolly strains of the music. They heard it to the end, with its running crescendo and its crash, indicating that all the wooden soldiers had fallen down. The slight whir of the gramophone stopped and "5 Y M" spoke again.

"'5 Y M' testing. I hope you got that all right, '1 T G.' Hold on a minute and I'll put on another record."

Again came the whir of the needle, and there started the delightful "Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairies."

But things did not go so well this time. Roger was listening with his head a little on one side, enjoying the almost perfect reproduction of the tuneful melody, and Joan was beating time with her hands, when suddenly, as though it had been cut off with a knife, the music stopped dead.

"Hallo! He's blown out one of his valves! Nothing more from him to-night, I expect," said Dr. Bastable. But Roger, who was sitting facing the window, pointed with excited finger out into the darkness of the night.

"Look! Look!" he cried. "Why, I do believe the aerial is on fire!"

His uncle took one look out through the big window, and then turned with a sharp command to his daughter.

"Put the light out, Joan," he ordered.

Joan obeyed instantly, and the room was plunged in darkness, save for the dull glimmer of the valve lamps on the receiving set.

Outside they could see that the whole length of the double wires of the aerial was glowing with a golden light. It was strongest at the end away from the house; but even the lead-in wire emitted a golden light, and the three tightly wound coils of wire on the receiving set were bathed in a faint, golden radiance.

"The Golden Ray! The Golden Ray again. This is the third time within a month that it has cut me out completely," said Dr. Bastable with a trace of excitement in his voice.

He threw over a switch which disconnected the aerial from the set. The aerial wire continued to glow brightly; but the yellow light round the tuning coils disappeared. Then he connected wires from a frame hanging from the ceiling to his set. He swung the frame round and found that in one position, and one position only, it glowed, just as the aerial was glowing outside. When he pointed the frame towards London they could hear the music from their friend still coming from the loud-speaker; but not so strongly as when it had been picked up by the aerial outside.

"This is called a frame aerial," Dr Bastable explained, seeing that Roger was looking at the apparatus with more than ordinary interest. "See, when I move it round we cannot hear '5 Y M' any more. It will only pick up signals coming straight towards the sides of the frame. See, when I place it like this it is all lit up by the Yellow Ray. That Ray is coming from somewhere either due south-

west or due north-east." He seized a big shield of shiny metal and held it first to one end and then to the other of the frame. When it was at one end the Golden Ray died away, only to return again immediately he removed the shield.

"You can cut off the rays with that shield, can't you, uncle?" asked Roger. "That means that they are coming from the south-west, doesn't it? What is it? Where does it come from?"

"Yes, the rays are coming from the south-west," said Dr. Bastable slowly. "But what they are or where they start from is more than I can tell you. It is a mystery, a tremendous mystery. I saw my aerial radiating that golden light for the first time about three weeks ago. I made inquiries, but could hear of no one else who had witnessed the phenomenon. It only lasted for a few moments, and was not nearly so strong as it is now." He turned to the window. "Ah, the light has disappeared!" He turned to his transmitting instrument and was soon in communication with various other experimenters. He could learn nothing, though, and soon switched off his power.

"Father thinks that someone has discovered some mysterious new rays and is experimenting with them with the idea of doing damage, stopping the wireless messages of the whole world," said Joan.

"Yes, I did think it might be something like that," said Dr. Bastable, shaking his head as he bent over his instruments again and started to send out a rapid Morse message with his telegraph key. "I don't know what to think now, though," he declared after a brief spell of tapping. "Quiet now, youngsters. I am going to see if the people at Marconi House have had any reports of interruptions to their services."

Joan raised a beckoning finger, and Roger followed her to a corner of the big room.

"Isn't it exciting?" she whispered. "When it happened the second time, about five days ago, several stations reported that their signals were completely blotted out. The big Post Office wireless at Leafield was one of them. There were two ships, too, and an aeroplane flying in the south of France had its engine stopped. The pilot said that not only his wireless, but his whole 'plane was shining with the golden light for nearly a minute. It was lucky for him that he was very high up. He just sailed on with his engine jammed until he got out of the ray, or it stopped. Then his engines started again, and he was all right."

"Perhaps these are the rays that are stopping aeroplanes and motor-cars in Germany," said Roger, who reads the papers diligently, particularly when they contained anything about wireless or aeroplanes or ships. "What is uncle doing now? I wish I could read the Morse code. It must be great fun to talk in dots and dashes like that."

"'Look!' he cried. 'Why, I do believe the aerial is on fire!'"

Drawn by Albert Morrow

He looked towards the spare, strong figure of his uncle, who was still tap-tapping away at his key, pausing every now and then to read the replies to his messages in the head-'phones which he wore, like a helmet, over his ears. Roger thought himself a lucky fellow to have so clever and famous an uncle, and to be going on a trip with him in his motor-yacht.

"Father is doing what he said. Asking for information." She listened carefully to the little clicks of the key. "He's talking to the Post Office now, the General Post Office in London. You see, father isn't like an ordinary experimenter. He does work for the Post Office and for Marconi's as well, so he is allowed to call up and talk to anyone he likes. Sometimes he even has long messages from Senatore Marconi himself. I expect we shall get in touch with him while we are on the *Radio*. And you shall learn Morse on the voyage, Roger. Really, it is easy, if only you try hard for a bit. I think it's silly to have a wireless set if you can't read the signals. Why, they are heaps more interesting than the broadcasting, though that is splendid and very wonderful."

Dr. Bastable rapped out a final series of dots and dashes, switched off his power, and rose from his chair.

"It's been rather worse than before, this time," he said, his face very grave. "Several stations reported their working completely stopped for many minutes, round about the time that we were stopped, though not at exactly the same time. And an aeroplane crashed just outside Manchester. No one killed; but the pilot has broken his arm, poor fellow. Marconi House can't be sure that it was due to the Golden Ray; but they are investigating. I'm afraid our little trip in the *Radio* is off, youngsters. I am under orders. I have to give up everything and try to find out who it is that is doing this mischievous thing. Somebody with bad intentions, I'll be bound. Oh, by the way, you must keep your mouths shut, both of you. Not a word of this business is to get out. It is to be kept a secret, if it possibly can be kept a secret. Neither of you must speak of it to anybody."

Joan nodded her head, and looked at Roger, whose face had fallen. He had been looking forward for weeks to that promised trip with his uncle. It seemed very hard lines that it would have to fall through.

"Half a moment," said Dr. Bastable, looking at a big map that hung on one wall of the room. "Those rays come from the south-west, and there is nothing to the south-west save the sea. I shall have to use the yacht if I am to find out anything. I don't see why you shouldn't come with me, both of you. If I find myself being led too far away, or likely to run into any danger, I can call in somewhere and pack the pair of you home on the first steamer. What do you say to a little chase after this miscreant, whoever he is, eh, Joan? eh, Roger? Maybe it will be a bit more interesting than just cruising around calling up lightships and lighthouses and shore-stations, as we were going to do."

"Oh, that will be top-hole, uncle. Will you take us, really?" Roger almost shouted with excitement. He pulled himself up to his full five feet four inches and felt almost a grown man.

"If Roger meets the fellow who has been sending out the Golden Ray he'll eat him without pepper and salt," cried Joan, her golden, bobbed hair shaking as she laughed. "I didn't know you were such a fire-eater, Roger. Why, I believe you think we shall start out on a regular sort of privateering expedition. But I've been with father before when he has been investigating mysteries, and though he always threatens to send me home if there is the slightest sign of danger, there is never any danger at all. It is always as tame as a picnic. You'll see. It will be like that this time."

"We'll hope it is, Joan," smiled Dr. Bastable. "But I seem to remember just a few little adventures in those voyages you say were so very tame. What about the time when real black pirates tried to sneak the yacht from us off the coast of Africa, and you knocked two of them overboard by throwing the tea-kettle at them? And what about that sailor you jumped overboard to save?"

"Oh, that was nothing, father," said Joan, blushing as Dr. Bastable gently pulled her ear.

Roger looked at his cousin with new interest. When he had come down into Cornwall, not having seen her for some years, he had thought her rather decent—for a girl. But a girl who can read Morse straight off the key, when you cannot even read proper signals, a girl who has knocked a couple of black pirates over-

board, and saved a man from drowning, and still is not quite sixteen—well, she must be rather out of the ordinary run. At least, that is what Roger thought.

"We shall start early in the morning," said Dr. Bastable. "Tell them to have breakfast ready by six-thirty, Joan. The *Radio* is ready for sea at a moment's notice. Old Trevallen told me so this afternoon. Well, bed-time, youngsters. Best pack your things as much as you can to-night, Roger. It's nearly midnight, and you may oversleep in the morning."

"I'm not a bit sleepy, uncle," declared Roger stoutly. "Of course, I'll pack to-night. And I don't expect I'll sleep a wink. My word, what a jolly time we are going to have searching out the Golden Ray! No, I shan't be able to sleep for thinking about it all. It is jolly of you to take me, uncle. Good night."

With that Roger went to his room, packed his two bags for the morning, and got into bed. Directly his head touched the pillow he fell into a dreamless sleep. He was a lot more tired than he knew.

CHAPTER II

The Mystery of the Golden Rays

"UGH! G-r-r-r! What on earth——?" Roger sat bolt upright in bed with a tremendous start. Something soft and horribly clingsome had hit him full in the face. His head and neck were wringing wet. He dashed the water from his eyes and stared straight in front of him, to see the laughing face of Joan looking at him round the door. A wet sponge fell with a plop on to the floor.

"I thought that would wake you up, sleepy head," said Joan. "It's half-past five, and I've been knocking on your door for hours. Oh, Roger, I've some great news for you."

"Oh, have you?" said Roger, a little sulkily, because he didn't like being wakened up suddenly with a wet sponge, and a very cold one at that. "Well, breakfast isn't until half-past six, and my bag's packed. I think I'll have another sleep."

With that he made as though he was going to snuggle down again; but he stretched out a swift arm instead, seized the sponge, and flung it with all his force at his cousin.

Joan closed the door just in time. The sponge hit it with a splosh, and Roger laughed, feeling quite good-tempered again now.

"Bad shot!" cried Joan from behind the door. "And I shan't tell you my news. You can wait until breakfast-time for it. Perhaps I won't tell you, even then. You might have wetted my new yachting costume. Then I should have had to dress all over again."

"Oh, all right, I'll make it pax, Joan," Roger called. "What's the great news? Open the door and tell me. If it is something really good—well, perhaps I'll get up."

The door was pushed open a few inches; but Joan's head did not appear again. Evidently she thought Roger might have some more effective reprisal in store for her.

"Father had a call to London, to the G.P.O., after you had gone to bed last night," she told him. "He routed me out this morning to explain things. He's taken the car to Okehampton, and he's going to fly to London from there. It's about the Golden Ray, Roger! Isn't it exciting? And we are to go round to Falmouth with the *Radio*. Captain Trevallen is to lay in stores, because it may be a long voyage. Oh, and father is going to see your father whilst he is in London, to see if he will mind you being away for more than the three weeks you were to spend with us. Roger, it looks as though we might be away for a long time. Oh, hurry and get up. If I don't have a good talk to someone I shall—I think I shall burst!"

With that she pulled the door shut with a bang, and Roger heard her running down the passage. He shouted to her, because he very much wanted to get some more details. It was no use, though, Joan had gone. Roger jumped out of bed, wrapped his dressing-gown round him, and tore off to the bath-room. He was in and out of his tub like a flash, and finished his dressing in record time. He bolted downstairs, to find Joan sitting at the breakfast-table eating an egg and drinking tea as calmly as though she had not bombarded him out of a perfectly good sleep not many minutes before, as calmly as though the thought of doing so tomboyish a thing would never have entered her sleek head.

"Hallo, Roger! Good morning! What's the excitement?" she asked. "Do you always come into rooms like a whirlwind?"

Roger looked at her for a moment, and then he laughed.

"You can't play that kind of game on me," he said. "It's no good pretending that this is just an ordinary breakfast, 'cause it isn't. And you are just as excited as I am. You know you are! Oh, I do hope father says I may go all the way with you."

Joan's grey eyes twinkled, and then she, too, laughed.

"Isn't it scrumptious?" she cried, waving a piece of toast gaily. "Oh, eat your breakfast as quickly as you can, Roger. We'll start just so soon as we've done. Father was awfully mysterious this morning when he set off. He pretends to be annoyed at the interruption of his other work, but I know he's as pleased as Punch, really. You see, the Post Office people wouldn't have sent for him unless they thought he was the one to do the job properly. It will be a great, big feather in his cap if he can find out where these Golden Rays are coming from."

"Has he any idea at all?" asked Roger, tucking into his breakfast as though he didn't expect to get another meal for a very long time. "Does he know how far we shall have to go?"

"No, I don't think he has any plans whatever," Joan told him, wrinkling up her forehead and trying to look as like her clever father as she could. This was a little affectation of hers; but as she did it rather nicely it didn't really matter. "You see, Roger, these can't be ordinary wireless waves, because ordinary wireless is quite invisible. It must be something new, some new discovery that someone has made. But father will solve the mystery, no matter how far the search leads him. Of course he will solve it. Father always does everything he sets out to do."

"But we might have to go an enormous distance. Right round the world, perhaps!" cried Roger. At the thought of this possibility Joan sprang from her chair, and the pair of them did a one-step round the table until they were out of breath.

Then they saw one of the crew of the yacht *Radio*—Ginger everyone called him—coming up the drive with a push-cart. So Roger finished off his breakfast and rushed upstairs for his bags. Then they set off along the shore road to Dr. Bastable's private jetty, where a trim boat was waiting to take them out to the *Radio*. Ginger was well ahead of them, and they were racing after him, when a gruff voice suddenly arrested them.

They turned to see a curious-looking old man appearing from behind a big rock. He had a long white beard, and from under shaggy brows his eyes burned as though they had twin fires alight behind them.

"Stop a minute. I want to talk to you!" he growled.

Roger didn't like the look of the old fellow a little bit. He moved in front of Joan, so that he could protect her if need be. But Joan was not in the least frightened.

"Why, it's Mr. Salters," she said with a little laugh. "What are you doing, Mr. Salters? Not playing hide-and-seek, surely, at this hour in the morning?"

"I'm not playing! I'm not playing at anything!" the old man shouted. It was quite evident that he was in a tremendous rage. "I tell 'ee, this here wirelessing has got to stop."

"But why, Mr. Salters? It hasn't done you any harm. It's the most wonderful and useful invention since the steam-engine was found out, father says." Joan still smiled as she spoke, but she was doing her best to calm the old fellow. She knew him very well. He was a farmer who was reputed to be very eccentric; but, so far, Joan had always been the best of friends with him.

"No harm! No harm!" shouted the old man. "Why, last night I saw thicey bits o' wire your father has slung up there all glowing bright and horrible. An' this morning there was my best pig lying stiff and cold. I tell 'ee, it's got to stop!"

"But, look here, sir," said Roger politely. "The wireless couldn't have killed your pig. It is quite impossible. Wireless can't——" Then he stopped suddenly, for the thought came to him that perhaps the Golden Ray, which had done so many curious things, might also be capable of killing living creatures which were in its path.

"And what about my nevvy, Bob?" cried Mr. Salters, not seeming to notice Roger nor to have heard what he said. "Run away, he has, because I wouldn't let him play with the silly bits o' stuff your father gave him. Wasting his time, he was, wasting his time and his substance. Tied wire, he did, to my apple tree. Blowed the house up, he would have, if I hadn't

stopped 'un. Oh, yes, I stopped 'un to rights. And now he've gone, and my best pig's dead, all along o' your doings, your wicked doings, you and your father!"

"Bob run away?" said Joan. "Oh, I am sorry. But—but you must have been rather unkind to him, Mr. Salters. Bob wasn't the kind of boy to run away, unless——"

"Yes, I reckon I was unkind to him, the young wastrel," broke in Mr. Salters. "I took the strap to him, I did. And that's how I'd serve all that mixes theirselves up with such things. My pig's dead, and Bob's run away. I tell 'ee, it's got to stop! I tell 'ee, it's got to stop!"

The old man's voice rose to a roar. Then he darted behind the rock from which he had appeared and came forth brandishing a small axe.

Roger took one look at its keen blade, and then jumped towards him, striving to wrest the axe from him. With a snarl old Salters threw him off, and then started off at a run, straight towards the tall aerial mast that stood in Dr. Bastable's garden.

"Quick, Roger! Quick!" cried Joan. "He's going to cut down the aerial. Stop him! You must stop him! Ginger! Here! Ginger!"

"Righto! I'm coming, Miss Joan," cried Ginger, who had reached the jetty and had turned to see why the two youngsters were so long in following him, and he set off back again at a run.

But Roger was already after the demented old farmer, racing as hard as he could go. The old man reached the mast first, and, raising his axe high, brought it down with all his force on the base of the mast, which was constructed of wooden trellis work, like a small Eiffel Tower. Two or three chips of wood flew out, and then Roger was on him. He made no mistake this time. He grabbed the axe and wrenched it free. Then, whirling it round his head, he sent it spinning into a great clump of bushes about twenty feet away from the foot of the mast.

For a moment the two, breathless and panting, faced one another. Then old Salters, his face distorted with rage, leaped at his young adversary.

Having done what he had intended to do and prevented the old man from damaging the valuable wireless mast, Roger wanted to get away. Of course this would have been easy, because he could run two feet to the old farmer's one. But, somehow, he felt that to run would not be a very dignified proceeding, and he certainly wasn't going to fight with a man old enough to be his grandfather. Of course, all this passed through the youngster's mind like a flash. As Salters dashed at him Rogers just dodged behind the wireless mast. He could see the sailor called Ginger rushing up, and he knew that he

"'And what about my nevvy Bob?' cried Mr. Salters"

Drawn by Albert Morrow

was in no real danger from the infuriated old man.

Then, as Salters dodged round after him, a funny notion struck Roger. He laughed aloud at the thought, and gripping the lattice work of the mast he started to climb up.

"If you want me you'll have to climb for me, Mr. Salters," he called, and went up, hand over hand, until he was about fifteen feet in the air, which was about a quarter the way up the tall mast.

To his astonishment when he looked down he saw Salters grip the woodwork in his turn and start to climb after him. The mast swayed and creaked at the added weight, and Joan cried out in fear. By this time Ginger had arrived, and stood at the bottom of the mast scratching his red head, with a comical look of consternation on his freckled face.

"Oh, come down, Roger! Come down! The mast will break and you'll both be killed!" cried Joan.

"Easier said than done," thought Roger. "He'll try to collar me as I pass him, and then we might both fall. I don't think the mast will break, though. It seems stout enough. Whatever does the silly old fellow mean by his antics, I wonder?"

Roger looked up and saw that, about another ten or fifteen feet above his head, four steel wire stays were attached to the mast, stretching down to where they were firmly anchored to concrete blocks built into the ground.

"What a lark!" he chuckled. "I'll just shin up to those stays and then slide down by one of them. I bet it will hold my weight. Won't old Salters be wild when he sees me go skating down by the back stairs, so to speak!"

It was evident that something would have to be done quickly, for Salters, breathing like a labouring motor-car, was nearly up to him. He looked as though he had lost all control of his temper, and Roger began to wish that he had just taken to his legs and run when he had had the chance.

"Good-bye, grandpa. Sorry I can't stop!" he called cheerily, and made his way rapidly to the half-way point on the mast where the stays were fastened. He tested one of the steel ropes and found that it was sturdy and not too thin to be grasped comfortably. Still holding on to the mast he threw his legs on to the stay, locking them, as well as he could, round the rope. Then he took his cap from his head and used it as a shield for his hands. He knew that once he left his hold on the mast he would have considerable difficulty in checking the speed of his downward slide, and that to attempt it with bare hands would be very painful.

"Stand by to stop me, Ginger!" he called. "I'm coming down, but I don't want to go right through to Australia!"

Then he released his hold on the mast, gripped the wire rope through his cap with his two hands, and down he went, doing his best to stop himself from time to time with his legs and an arm that was twisted over the rope.

It was a breathless, dizzying rush, and he was glad that Ginger was there to stop him. He disentangled himself from the wire, and then looked at his hands, which felt as though they were on fire. They were all right, but a big line had been worn right into the tweed of his cap. It looked as though he had put it against a red-hot bar.

"Oh, Roger! Ginger! Look! Look! He's going to fall!" cried Joan, and pointed to the mast. Roger, who had been grinning into the friendly eyes of Ginger whilst he brushed himself down, looked up as he had been bidden, and then bolted for the foot of the mast again. He did not know quite what had happened; but he could see that poor old Salters was in trouble. He was clinging desperately to the mast.

"He's lost his nerve! Can't move, neither up nor down!" cried Ginger, who, being a sailor, knew what happened to people when they tried to scale masts for the first time. "Here, let me up. I'll fetch him down! I know how to handle him!"

But Roger did not stop. He suddenly realized that but for his silly prank in scaling the mast the old farmer would not have been in so dangerous a position. He dashed up the mast without the slightest thought that he was running into danger for the second time, and that it was a very difficult job he was tackling. He reached the trembling, white-faced old man in far less time than he had taken to scale the distance on his first trip.

"Put your arm round my shoulder and cling on tightly, Mr. Salters," he said. "I can't carry all your weight; but I'll help you down, and I'll see that you don't fall."

"I can't! I can't!" the old man moaned. "If I leave go I shall crash to the ground. I know I shall!"

Roger knew that there was no sense in arguing, so he tried to take the old fellow's weight by pushing his head under his arm. Old Salters screamed with fear, and Roger had to cling on to him like a leech to prevent him loosing his hold and falling.

Then the mast began to shake and tremble violently, and in a very few seconds Ginger was alongside them. He whipped a short length of rope from his pocket and passed it round old Salters' body, and round the mast, too.

"Now he's all right," he said cheerfully. "You're all right, guv'nor. You have no idea how right you are. You couldn't fall, not if you was to try. Just you try and see. You could leave go with both hands and you wouldn't fall."

Old Salters looked first at Roger and then at the sailor, and then he slowly released one hand and mopped the perspiration from his clammy forehead.

"That's right, my hearty. Now just you let your Uncle Ginger see to you and you'll be safe and sound on terra-cotta, as the saying is, in less than half no time."

The old man did not make any reply, but he let Ginger take hold of him and help him down to the ground.

When he got there he marched off without a word of regret or apology for the trouble he had caused, nor of thanks for his rescue.

Roger, who had scrambled down the mast after the sailor and the old man, looked after him wonderingly.

"Queer old stick!" he said. "What was his little game, anyhow? I suppose it isn't he who is sending out the Golden Rays, and his anger and all the rest of it was just acting to put us off the track?"

"No, I don't think so," was Joan's answer. "A lot of the country people round here think that wireless is a kind of magic. Some of them actually thought that father's aerial was the cause of the hot, dry summer we had a year or two ago. Five of them came with a petition asking him to take it down. No, I think the poor old fellow is just worried and angry because his pig is dead, and because Bob has run away. I wish we could find Bob, he can't have gone very far. But we can't. We've wasted enough time as it is. We must get on board, or Captain Trevallen will be furious with us. He doesn't like being kept waiting. Come on, Roger! Come on, Ginger! You got old Salters down most cleverly, and I'm going to say 'Thank you,' even if he didn't."

"'Two men on a broken mast,' he said curtly. 'One is waving a handkerchief or something'" *Drawn by Albert Morrow*

With that Joan started to run towards the waiting boat, and the others followed hard on her heels.

CHAPTER III

Out to Sea

THE motor-yacht *Radio*, heading south on a long slant to round the Lizard, had a "bone in her teeth," as sailors say. She was making nearly twenty knots, and as she crashed through the long, rolling billows of the Atlantic a great curl of spray curved up from each side of her sharp and shapely bows, to fall back with a constant singing roar. Behind her

long, white wake shone and glittered in the dancing sunlight.

Joan had just taken her cousin on a tour of inspection, from the neat and natty little engine-room, with its pair of whirring oil engines, to the crew's quarters, forward. She had shown him his tiny cabin, and had instructed him in the art of making himself comfortable in restricted quarters. Already she had laughed at him because he had said "downstairs," when he should have said "below," and had tried to make him remember that the right-hand side of a ship is the "starboard," and the left the "port."

"All right, Joan, you can tease me as much as you please," said Roger with a merry laugh, as they stood together on the little bridge by the side of Tom Allen, the mate, who was now in charge. "This is all new to me, and you have been to sea many times before. I'll pick it up soon. My word, isn't it glorious? I never thought it would be so splendid. Mother told me that I should be sick; but I feel like a king. And it is really quite rough, isn't it?"

Roger turned to the mate, who looked at him with a friendly grin.

"Hardly what you'd call rough, young 'un," he answered. "There's a bit of a pobble on, and a nice breeze we should be thankful for if we had to depend on sails. But you'll do. There's many a landlubber would have gone under with far less motion than this."

A deck hand came from the fo'c'sle and rang three double strokes on a small bell suspended against the pole foremast. Roger looked at his watch and saw that it was eleven o'clock.

"Six bells in the forenoon watch," said Tom Allen. "That is another thing you will have to get used to. We don't use ordinary clock time at sea, you know."

"Who is that man, Mr. Allen?" asked Joan. "I've never seen him before, and I don't like his face a little bit. Wherever did you find him? Is he an extra hand, or is one of my old friends not with us this trip?"

Tom Allen took a glance at the man who was walking slowly back to the shelter of the fo'c'sle.

"Bill Smith was the name he signed on with," he said. "And I fancy I am inclined to agree with you, Miss Joan. He had good recommendations as a yachtsman, and his discharge papers were quite all right; but he doesn't look quite our class."

"I think he looks a regular pirate," said Joan. Then she laughed, though she could not quite get over the feeling of uneasiness her sight of the fellow's face had caused her. "Well, after all, he can't help his looks, can he? And he may be quite all right. But who is missing? I am sorry we have not all the old crew with us. They are such dears, and I feel that I have known them for years and years, as, of course, I have."

"Two of the old crew couldn't come with us at the last moment," explained the mate, and gave their names. "They had both had good jobs offered them on shore, and as they are both married men, of course they accepted. We had to rush around Newquay to find substitutes, and we were jolly lucky to get Bill Smith and another, a fellow named Grumbles. Grumbles by name and Grumbles by nature, so far as I can see. Yes, I am sorry we couldn't have kept the crowd together. With only six deck hands and four engineers, and only three of us in the after-guard, besides your father, Miss Joan, who is as good a sailor as any of us, it is just as well to be all friends."

Just then a bright-faced youngster came up the bridge ladder. It was Johnny Dark, the wireless operator. Johnny Dark was his name, but everyone called him "Sparks," except Dr. Bastable. He was only eighteen, but a first-class operator.

"Just picked up the owner, Miss Joan," he said. "He's on the key in London. Wants a word with you."

"Come on! It's father!" Joan explained to Roger, and hurried off after Sparks to the finely equipped wireless cabin where Dr. Bastable conducted his experiments when he was on board.

She sat down and slipped on the head-'phones in a most businesslike way. Then she placed her fingers lightly on the key.

"What's the station?" she asked of Sparks, meaning in ordinary everyday language that she wanted to know where he was and what letters she would have to use to make him know that she was calling him. Sparks supplied the information, and then Joan threw over the switch and began the business of getting into communication with her father. Ten minutes of busy tapping and intent listening and she turned to Roger, taking the 'phones from her head and resigning the

seat to Sparks, who had been watching her at work, with no attempt to conceal his admiration for her skill.

"Father is in London safely," she said. "He hopes to be in Falmouth to-night, or early to-morrow at the latest. He says there are some startling developments; but, of course, he couldn't tell me anything by radio. Come on, let's go on the bridge again. We must be nearly level with the Lizard by now."

As they left the cabin they heard a long-drawn call from the look-out forward.

"Raft on the port bow!" the man called, and there was an answering shout from the bridge.

Joan and Roger bolted up to find Tom Allen had headed the *Radio* straight for the object which the look-out had spotted. They could see it plainly as the bows of the yacht swung down; a black spot on the waste of water.

"Somebody's on it. He's waving!" cried Joan, and the mate, with his glasses to his eyes, nodded.

"Two men on a broken mast," he said curtly. "One is waving a handkerchief, or a bit of his shirt or something. Looks as though he was nearly done, though." He rang down to the engine-room for more speed, and they felt the yacht leap to the spur of the increased power.

They were soon up to the pathetic piece of wreckage, with its human freight. The yacht circled and came to a stop. Tom Allen barked out his orders for the lowering of a boat; but there was no need really for the order, for four of the deck hands were ready for their duty. Captain Trevallen came on to the bridge, and the mate darted off to take command of the boat.

Suddenly Joan, who had been gazing intently at the wreckage, gave a cry of amazement.

"Why, it's Bob! It's Bob Salters!" she cried. "How ever did he come to be here?"

Then a dreadful thing happened. Bob Salters, who had been clinging to the wreckage with one hand, suddenly let go his hold and sank from sight. Evidently his strength had failed him just when help had come, and he had fainted.

Roger had been staring with awe-struck eyes; but the next moment he felt as though he was in the middle of a cyclone.

"Hold this!" cried Joan, and her skirt, which she had flung at him, wrapped itself round his head and shoulders. He struggled free, and had a fleeting sight of his cousin, looking as though she was in gym. costume, poised on the rail. The next instant she had dived overboard to the rescue.

(To be continued)

The Man with the Changing Hair

By W. Wood

A little man with black, black hair
Went to a barber and sat in the chair,
But the barber's eyes nearly jumped from his head
When he saw that the black hair was turning red.
"Please, what do you want?" the barber cried.
"I want my hair cut," the man replied.
"Oh, yes—of course—shall I take much off?"
The man in the chair began to cough,
And as he coughed his hair turned white.
The barber shook with a horrible fright,
Dropped his scissors and away he ran.
"Ho-ho, ho-ho!" laughed the dwarfish man,
"I can now do jolly well what I please."
He snapped his fingers and slapped his knees,
Then he found a bottle guaranteed
To restore the hair with incredible speed.
He poured it out on the top of his head—
His hair turned back to a fiery red,
And then with a finger spread application
He made a gentle titillation.
His hair quite slowly turned coal black,
The little man patted himself on the back.
"I've done it," he said, "I knew I could,
My credit will once again be good.
I shall change once more and they'll shout and cheer
And quite forget that I cost them dear.
I knew I could do it," he chuckled with glee,
And then, quite wonderful to see,
The coal-black hair began to smoke:
The little man seemed to think it a joke.
He sat and watched it, and then there came
All over his head a bursting flame,
A bursting flame which burned with a crackle,
And through it all you could hear him cackle.
He waved his hands as if weaving a spell:
"I'm a wizard," he cried, then, strange to tell,
The barber slowly came creeping back
And peeped in his shop, but his jaw fell slack
When all he saw in the barber's chair
Was just a tuft of smoking hair.
The shop was full of a sulphury smell;
The reflective barber said, "Well, well!"
He opened the window and swept the floor,
And then he stood by the open door.
He looked very grave as he shook his head:
"You can change too often," was all he said.

A Tall Story

By Irene M. Overton

Mary Ann and Sarey Ann were terrible twins of nine,
Who always were inseparable through hail, rain, storm and shine.
And which was Mary, which was Sarey, no one could discover,
In height, breadth, voice, features and clothes—one was so like the other!

Their lives were very much mixed up—the like you never heard!
The complications that ensued were really too absurd.
If Mary Ann a good deed did, and Sarey was the sinner,
To Sarey Ann went the reward—while Mary had no dinner!

That this was hard on Mary Ann no doubt you will admit,
For Sarey Ann would laugh and crow, and didn't care a bit.
But, when sometimes things were reversed and Mary got the honey,
Then Sarey Ann quite failed to see that things were very funny.

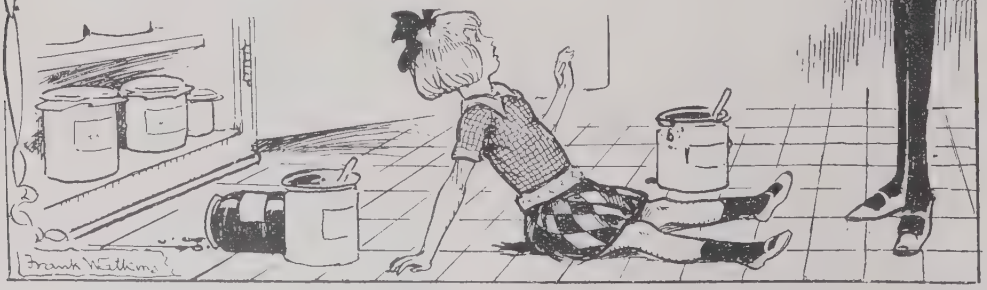
But, generally, they agreed that it was great good fun
To see folks' puzzled faces over naughty things they'd done.
When cook bewailed the tarts and jam—the rapid way they went—
Nobody knew which twin to blame, both looked so innocent!

Now this distressing state of things might have gone on for—well,
Ever and ever (and after that!), but a shocking thing befell
Those awful twins—who little thought of storms that were a-brewing,
And how their love for stolen sweets would prove their own undoing.

One day, upon the topmost shelf, a new green jar they spied;
To reach it first was each one's aim, and both together tried.
Now Sarey Ann reached the jar first, and claimed it as her right,
But Mary Ann would not agree—there was a dreadful fight.

Mary Ann proved the victor (though the fight was fierce and hot!),
Devoured the contents of the jar—then—wished that she had not.
Alas, the stuff was horrible! Had Mary Ann been wiser
She might have seen the label stated "Patent Fertilizer"!

The deed was done, and from that hour poor Mary started growing.
She still goes on (and where she'll stop there really is no knowing).
Each twin is now identified—no one is ever wrong—
For Sarey Ann is short, you see, and Mary Ann is long!



ANOTHER SERIAL FOR YOUNGER READERS

BOBBIE AND THE BEASTS

By Violet M. Methley

NO. 1.—BOBBIE AND THE CATS

IT is *much* harder to be good when you have red hair. At least, that is what Bobbie has decided, and he knows!

I just tell you this as a warning. Otherwise you may think that you are going to read a story about a really *nice* child, and that would be quite a mistake.

All the same, Bobbie's worst naughtiness was partly the fault of Uncle Geoff, and partly the fault of the *Daily M*—— But, no, I won't tell you the name of the paper, or I might get into trouble.

Anyhow, Bobbie was searching for the page about W——, only I won't mention *that* name either, because then you'd know—when he found the bit about Elephant's Hair.

It was really meant for mothers and governesses and people like that to read, and it said that rings made of Elephant's Hair were very lucky, and made those who wore them happy and successful.

So Bobbie thought and thought.

He had been hearing a lot about unluckiness lately. Daddy had been unlucky in losing a job, and mother in losing a cook, and Miss Ferguson, Bobbie's governess, in losing a brooch, and Sarah, the housemaid, in losing a young man,—which Bobbie thought was really *very* careless!

"*How* pleased they would be if I could get some Elephant's Hairs and make them all rings, so that they'd be happy and successful!" thought Bobbie, and at that very moment Uncle Geoff came in to ask whether he and Miss Ferguson would like passes for the Zoo.

I needn't tell you what Bobbie answered; it was just the same as you or I would have said.

Half an hour later he and Miss Ferguson started for the Zoo, and Bobbie had a very stern and resolute expression. Because, you know, he was thinking of the Elephant's Hairs, and planning how to get them.

Once they were inside the gates, Bobbie did not ask to go to the Monkey House, or the Mappin Terraces, or the Smaller Mammals. He made straight for the Elephants.

Bobbie stood in front of the biggest, and looked at him, and thought how *very* bald an elephant really is! This one didn't seem to have any hair, except a few whiskers, which the little boy could not reach.

Then the elephant held out its

trunk, and Bobbie saw that there were two or three hairs on the end of it, and he did a thing which really needed a great deal of braveness, although nobody seemed to see it.

He held out a bun to the elephant with one hand, and took hold of a hair with the other. Then he pulled.

"'Oh! I do believe you're Puss in Boots!'"

Drawn by Helen Jacobs

It was a very tough hair. Bobbie pulled a little harder, and a little harder, until suddenly the elephant must have felt it, because he tossed up his trunk and trumpeted.

You have no *idea* how loud an elephant's trumpet sounds when you are close to it!

Everyone looked round, and Miss Ferguson stopped thinking about her lost brooch, and two keepers came running up, and—oh, dear, there *was* a fuss!

Miss Ferguson and the keepers and the elephant were all as angry as they could be with Bobbie, and Miss Ferguson took him straight home and scolded him all the way for being cruel and teasing animals, and he was put to bed in broad daylight, with a mug of milk, and two very dry biscuits, and one very wet pocket-handkerchief.

So that was that!

Of course, being a boy and eight years old, Bobbie didn't cry very long. When he had finished, and was just thinking of eating the biscuits and drinking the milk, Kate, the kitten, came in through the window, and jumped on to the bed, and rubbed herself against Bobbie and purred in a very comforting way.

Then Bobbie poured some of the milk into a saucer, and Kate lapped, and Bobbie lapped, too, at the other side of the saucer, just to see if he could. And then Kate sat up and wiped the milk off her whiskers, and talked.

Yes, she really talked! You can't possibly be more surprised than Bobbie was.

"That's better," she said. "I was very thirsty."

"B-b-but I didn't know you were a *fairy* cat!" gasped Bobbie. "I didn't know you could talk!"

"All cats can!" Kate answered crossly. "Only you human people are so silly that you can't understand, as a rule. *You* can only do it now because we lapped milk together, that's all."

"Well, I'm very glad," said Bobbie. "And, oh, do tell me where I can get some Elephants' Hairs! The Zoo is no good."

"Of course *yours* isn't," Kate said contemptuously. "You can't expect to get magic things from an ordinary Zoo. You *might* from the Fairy Zoo, but I'm not sure."

"Oh, where is it? Couldn't you take me there?" Bobbie cried, bumping up and down in bed with excitement.

"It's in Fairy-Beast-Land, and I suppose I can take you there," Kate said. "Grown-up people have to have a special pass, and it's very difficult to get, but children can usually go in. So come on!"

Bobbie scrambled out of bed and stood on the hearthrug.

Then the kitten gave a great jump, and Bobbie felt himself flying through the air. Presently they came to a big red house, with turrets and towers, like a castle, and a square green lawn in front.

"We are in Fairy-Beast-Land now," said Kate, "and this is the Cat-House. You go in, while I run about a bit. I want to stretch my paws."

So Bobbie walked into the big house rather shyly, for it wasn't at all like an ordinary Zoo, and there were no cages or anything.

There was a room inside, full of the softest chairs and sofas and cushions that you ever saw, and a huge, roaring fire. In a big arm-chair beside it sat a beautiful snow-white cat, dressed in pink satin, and in front of it stood a very big, very handsome tabby cat, who wore a blue velvet coat, a hat with plumes and the most lovely red morocco boots.

"Oh!" Bobbie was so excited that he could not stop to be polite. "I do believe you're Puss in Boots!"

The cat bowed stiffly.

"The Marquis of Carabas, at your service," he said. "I took the title when my late master became Prince Consort, on his marriage to the Princess. This is my wife, the White Cat."

The beautiful white cat curtsied very low, and Bobbie tried to bow, although he felt puzzled.

"But I thought—I thought she turned into a Princess and married the Prince, when—when her head was cut off——" he began.

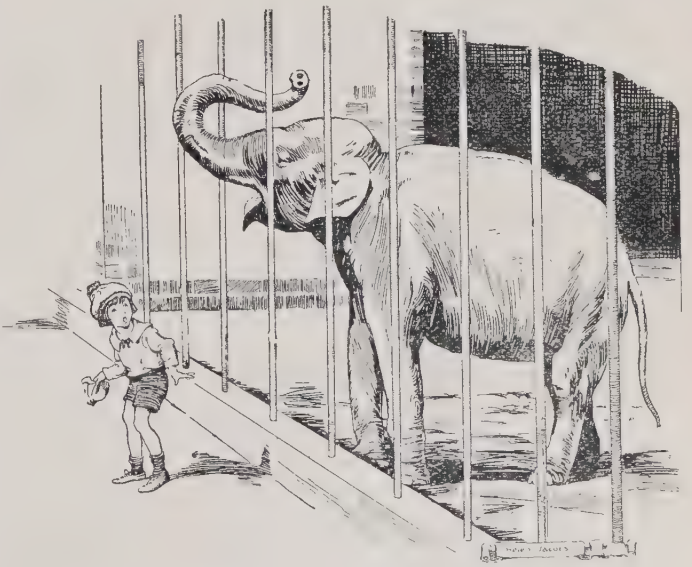
"Hush!" Puss-in-Boots frowned. "We never talk of that terrible incident. As a matter of fact, she preferred to become a cat again and marry *me!* But let me offer you some refreshment. We have the best milk and cream in Fairy-Beast-Land—from our own cows."

"Thanks awfully, only I'm not a bit thirsty," said Bobbie. "But I do wish you could tell me where I could get some Elephant's Hairs. That's what I really came for."

The Marquis of Carabas frowned, staring through a single eyeglass.

"No, I'm afraid I know nothing about elephants," he said. "My wife and I rarely mix with the other personages in the Zoo. Possibly our neighbour might be able to tell you. He lives just opposite."

So Bobbie left the castle, and went across the grass square to a much more cosy-looking house. And in the doorway was a huge smile of welcome, just a smile.



"You have no idea how loud an elephant's trumpet sounds when you are close to it"

Drawn by Helen Jacobs

Bobbie gave a cry of delight.

"I do believe it's the dear Cheshire Cat!" he exclaimed.

At once the whole cat began to appear, smiling more and more widely.

"I'm very glad that you had the

sense to recognize me," it said. "So many of these modern children mix me up with a new-fangled creature called Felix the Cat. Felix, indeed! A horrid, vulgar creature, *I* call him! He comes here sometimes, but he is generally acting for the Films. But how have you managed to come here, my dear?"

Bobbie was just going to explain, when there was a great mewing and miaou-ing and Kate came scampering on to the green, followed by a number of other cats. One of them was playing on a fiddle and the others were jumping about and dancing, and singing: "Hey diddle, diddle, the Cat and the Fiddle!" or "Pussy-cat high, Pussy-cat low!"

Bobbie wished that he could join the game, but he felt too shy. And at that minute a fine grey-striped cat came strolling along, and all the others rushed towards him.

"Pussy-cat, Pussy-cat, where have you been?" they cried.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I've been to London," the newcomer said. "I always like to visit the dear old place where I was born, and where I first met my dear master, Sir Richard."

"Oh, are you Dick Whittington's cat?" Bobbie asked.

"I am Sir Richard Whittington's cat. I believe I may say that I was helpful to him in his young days," the cat said modestly. "But this time I was staying at Buckingham Palace, as a matter of fact. The dear Queen had given me a standing invitation to pay her a visit, and I was pleased to find that I had not lost my old skill in hunting. I actually managed to kill a mouse under Her Majesty's chair."

Bobbie began to feel that he would never be able to get a word in, and he did so want to find out about the Elephant's Hairs.

"Please," he began rather timidly. "Please, can anyone tell me where—where the elephants live?"

All the cats shook their heads.

"We know nothing about the other animals in Fairy-Beast-Land. As a matter of fact," said Dick Whittington's cat, "we prefer to keep to ourselves."

"Then who *can* I ask?" Bobbie said, beginning to feel rather cross. "Perhaps if you'll tell me where the dogs are, they could——"

But before the little boy was able to say any more, all the cats began to shriek and miaou at the tops of their voices.

In two seconds they were off, running along with their tails swollen up and their hair on end all down their backs. In three seconds there was not a cat to be seen, except Kate the kitten, looking very frightened and ruffled and cross.

"Come along!" she cried angrily. "You really are too silly for anything! Fancy talking about *dogs*, when you know that they are our bitterest enemies! The word is never mentioned among us!"

"I'm very sorry," said Bobbie.

"It's no good being sorry!" Kate spat back. "The sooner you go back the better. Take my tail!"

So Bobbie took hold of Kate's tail and they began to fly along the road between the poplars. Faster and faster they went, till Bobbie couldn't see the trees at all—couldn't see anything. And then—BUMP!—he was back in bed again, with Kate crouching at the end of it, still looking very cross.

"Oh!" Bobbie gasped. "*What* a rush! But you'll take me back to Fairy-Beast-Land again, won't you, Kate? I *must* try to get those Elephant's Hairs, somehow!"

But Kate was evidently sulky.

She never said a word, only turned her back on Bobbie, and began to wash one of her paws very carefully, spreading out all the fingers.

So Bobbie knew that it was of no use to say anything more *that* night.

(To be continued)

A NOVEL IN A NUTSHELL

The Last of the Barons

By

Lord Lytton

The "Novel in a Nutshell" was so popular last volume that I have decided to run it again through this volume. Read "The Last of the Barons" in full after you have read this shorter edition of it.

WESTWARD, beyond the hamlet of Charing, a broad space, broken here and there by scattered houses and venerable pollards, in the early spring of 1467, presented the rural scene for the sports and pastimes of the inhabitants of Westminster and London. Scarcely need we say that open spaces for the popular games and diversions were then numerous in the suburbs of the metropolis.

And numerous now was the attendance, not only of the citizens, the burghers, and the idle populace, but of the gallant nobles who surrounded the court of Edward IV, then in the prime of his youth; the handsomest, the gayest, and the bravest prince in Christendom.

The revolution that placed Edward IV upon the throne had been a popular one. The king himself, partly from inclination, partly from policy, spared no pains to win the good graces of that slowly rising, but even then important, part of the population—the Middle Class. He was a man who could be familiar with his inferiors without losing his kingly dignity.

While thus the gifts, the courtesy, and the policy of the young sovereign made him popular with the middle classes, he owed the allegiance of the more powerful barons and the favour of the rural population to a man who stood colossal amidst the iron images of the Age—the greatest and the last of the old Norman chivalry—kinglier in pride, in state, in possessions, and in renown, than the king himself—Richard Nevile, Earl of Salisbury and Warwick.

This princely personage possessed all the attributes that endear the noble to the commons. His valour in the field was accompanied with a generosity rare in the captains of the time. He valued himself on sharing the perils and the hardships of his meanest soldier. His wealth was enormous, but it was equalled by his magnificence, and rendered popular by his lavish hospitality. No less than thirty thousand persons are said to have feasted daily at the open tables of his countless castles. More haughty than ambitious, he was feared because he avenged all affront; and yet not envied, because he seemed above all favour.

The holiday on the Archery-ground was more than usually gay, for the rumour had spread from the Court to the city that Edward was about to increase his power abroad by allying his sister Margaret with the brother of Louis XI, and that no less a person than the Earl of Warwick had been selected as ambassador on the important occasion.

On the pastime-ground an archery contest for the apprentices of London was in full swing. The butts, formed of turf, with a small white mark fastened to the centre by a very minute peg, were placed at a distance of eleven score yards from the competitors. Many were the wagers given and accepted as some well-known archer tried his chance. As yet, however, no marksman had hit the white, though many had gone close to it, when Nicholas Alwyn, a young north countryman who was the head 'prentice of Master Heyford the goldsmith, stepped forward.

"And now," said Nicholas, slowly adjusting the arrow, "a shot for the honour of old Westmorland." And as he spoke the arrow sprang gallantly forth and quivered in the very heart of the white. And Alwyn, turning round, said, with a significant glance at the silent nobles who stood in a group near by: "We springals of London can take care of our own, if need be."

"These fellows wax insolent. Our good king spoils them," said Montagu, Warwick's brother, with a curl of his lip. "I wish some young squire of gentle blood would not disdain a shot for the Nevile against the craftsman. How say you, fair sir?" And, with a princely courtesy of mien and smile, Lord Montagu turned to a young man he had noticed as wearing the cognisance of the Neviles.

The youth thus addressed was Marmaduke Nevile, a distant relative of Warwick's, who had just arrived in London from Westmorland to seek his fortune at Court. His honest, handsome face augured a frank and fearless nature, and he advanced unhesitatingly to try his skill. He fitted the shaft to the bow, and performed what was considered the greatest feat of all. Disdaining to transfix the white, he sped his arrow into the almost invisible peg which secured it, and the ground rang with delighted applause.

"Why," cried Nicholas Alwyn suddenly, "'tis you, Master Marmaduke. Well do I remember your showing me that trick at your father's in the north country before he died."

"Beshrew me!" cried the youth, and his cheerful features brightened with pleasure; "but if I see in thee, as it seems to me, my old

friend and foster-brother, Nick Alwyn, this is the happiest hour I have known for many a day."

When the contest was over and the silver arrow awarded to the winner, Marmaduke Nevile followed one of the smaller streams into which the crowd divided itself on dispersing from the archery-ground and presently found himself in the midst of the usual fair.

While, bewildered by this various bustle, he stared around him, his eye was caught by a young maiden in evident distress, who had been set upon by a troupe of timbrel-girls, or tymbesteres, who surrounded her with mocking gestures, striking their instruments to drown her remonstrances, and dancing about her in a ring at every effort to avoid escape. The girl was modestly attired as one of the humbler ranks, and her wimple half concealed her face; but her voice and bearing showed clearly that she was of gentle birth.

She was in bad plight among the timbrel-girls, a troupe of bad character and worse manners, who haunted fair-ground, camps and battlefields and were one of the plagues of that day; and when they were joined by a number of half-tipsy apprentices Marmaduke thought it time to interfere. His courage, his dagger and the Nevile badge on his hat daunted the assailants, and they began to retreat.

"Gentle sir, beware!" cried one apprentice. "As for the girl, your gallantry misleads you."

"The Wizard's daughter! ha! ha!—the Imp of Darkness!" screeched the timbrel-girls, tossing up their instruments and catching them again. "She has enchanted him with her glamour. Foul is fair! Foul fare thee, young springal, if thou go to the nets. Shadow and goblin to goblin and shadow. Flesh and blood to blood and flesh!"

With some difficulty and with a disgust which was partly a superstitious fear of these strange words and outlandish women, Marmaduke led the maiden away to a deserted part of the ground, where they were not pursued.

"And what mischance, my poor girl," he asked then, "brought thee into such evil company?"

"I know not, fair sir," said the girl, slowly recovering herself; "but my father is poor, and I had heard that on these holiday occasions one who had some slight skill on the gittern might win a few groats from the courtesy of the bystanders. So I stole out with my serving-woman, and had already got more than I dared hope when those wicked timbrel-players came round me and accused me of taking the money from them. And then they called an officer of the ground, who asked me my name and holding; so when I answered, they called my father a wizard, and the man broke my poor gittern—see! And they soon drove poor old Madge from my side, and I knew no more till you, worshipful sir, took pity on me."

"But why," asked the Nevile, "did they give to your father so unholy a name?"

"Alas, sir! he is a great scholar, who has spent his means in studying what he says will one day be of good to the people."

"Humph!" said Marmaduke, who had all the superstitions of his time, and looked upon a scholar, unless in the Church, with mingled awe and abhorrence, and who, therefore, was but ill-satisfied with the girl's artless answer. He was somewhat relieved when a few moments later they parted company.

BESET BY ROBBERS

Marmaduke betook himself to a meeting with his foster-brother which they had arranged when they met on the archery-ground, and here they talked of how Alwyn had prospered in London, of how Marmaduke hoped to prosper, and of the politics of the time. Marmaduke had a letter from his dead father to deliver to his kinsman, the Earl of Warwick, and he hoped much from it, for was not Warwick the most powerful man in England, termed the king-maker because he was the power behind the very throne? It was his valour and his army which had driven from the throne weak King Henry VI and imprisoned him in the Tower so that his crown might be worn by Edward. It was to him that Queen Margaret and her boy owed their exile.

As darkness began to fall the two young men parted, Nicholas to return to his master's shop and Marmaduke to his hostelry. But though the young gentleman knew his way well in the forests of home, the suburbs of this unknown city confused him. Soon he discovered that in the darkness, relieved only by a misty moon and a few faint stars, he had hopelessly lost his way. He found himself alone in places thoroughly unknown to him, and remembered grim tales of the brawlers and ruffians who haunted the outskirts of London at night. Suddenly a heavy hand was placed on his shoulder. Marmaduke's dagger was bare on the instant.

"And what wouldst thou with me?" he asked.

"Thy purse and thy dagger!" answered the stranger.

"Come and take them," said the Nevile. "Go to. Thy club"—for the stranger held a formidable one—"does not daunt me."

The stranger warily drew back a step and whistled loudly. The next moment Marmaduke was suddenly seized from behind, and found himself struggling in the arms of two men. From these he broke, and his dagger glanced harmless against the tough jerkin of his first assailant. The next moment his right arm fell to his side, useless and deeply gashed. A heavy blow on the head—the moon, the stars reeled in his eyes—and then darkness; he knew no more. His assailants very deliberately proceeded to rifle the inanimate body, and then disappeared into the darkness.

When Marmaduke, a few minutes later, began to revive, it was with a sensation of dizziness, pain and extreme cold. He struggled up, and tottered on for several paces. Then he saw, shining from a lattice a little distant, a solitary light. Now reeling, now falling, he still dragged on his limbs to that sign of refuge.

He gained the doorway of a detached and gloomy house, and sank on the stone before it to cry aloud.

"Open, for the love of Christ!"

A head was now thrust from the lattice, the light vanished; a minute more the door opened. . . .

After a long interval Marmaduke again recovered, and his eyes turned with pain from the glare of a light held to his face.

"He wakes, father—he will live!" cried a sweet voice.

"Ay, he will live, child," answered a deeper tone. Marmaduke was dimly aware of bandages and skilful tending before he fell asleep.

WARNER THE WIZARD

As Providence tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, so it possibly might conform the heads of that day to a thickness suitable for the blows and knocks to which they were variously subjected; at any rate, Nature, to say nothing of leechcraft, ultimately triumphed, and Marmaduke woke one morning in full possession of such understanding as Nature had endowed him with. Only then did he discover that his nurses were Sibyll Warner, the girl whom he had rescued from the timbrel-girls, and her serving-woman Madge, and that he was in the house of the man whom he had heard labelled by the dread word of wizard.

In those ignorant days such a nickname was easily acquired by any man whose learning was a little greater than that of others, for many folks were sure that everything they did not understand came straight from the devil. Adam Warner was simply a gentle old scholar and mechanician, who had spent all his fortune to forward his discoveries. He had invented a primitive form of the modern steam-engine, then undreamt-of, and was so immersed in his Eureka, as he called it, that he never noticed how he had reduced himself and his daughter to poverty, and his house almost to ruins, by spending so much on his science.

Sibyll in her childhood had been one of the maidens at the Court of Queen Margaret, the wife of Henry VI. When that monarch was dethroned by Edward IV she came home from the luxury of a palace to the greatest poverty and need. Yet she dearly loved her father and never complained. Marmaduke did not guess at the sacrifices which were made to give him the good food and medicaments needed for his recovery.

As Marmaduke grew stronger he remembered the letter he had for the Earl of Warwick, and as he could not yet walk so far as his hostelry a message was sent to Nicholas Alwyn to repair thither and to bring him all his brave attire and money to replace what the robbers had stolen. When his foster-brother arrived he told him of his adventures, and presented him to Mistress Sibyll, who seemed to the young apprentice the fairest maid he had ever seen. But Sibyll did not notice his admiration, for her heart was captured, all unknown, by Lord Hastings, one of the nobles about the king, who had once done her a service, but little dreamed that she loved him for it.

"Hem!" said Nicholas to the Nevile. "Thou seemest to have got into a poor house—a decayed gentleman, I wot, by the slovenly ruin."

"I would that were the worst," replied Marmaduke solemnly, and therewith he repeated to Nicholas the adventure on the pastime-ground, the warnings of the timbrel-girls, and the "awesome" learning and strange pursuits of his host.

Nicholas listened attentively, but what he had learnt of Warner did not prevent his staying to supper and devoting his attention to Sibyll. "Your father is a great man," he said as he parted from her.

"But were he to walk the streets they would stone him," replied Sibyll with a quiet bitterness.

The next day showed the truth of her words. Marmaduke was alone, tired of his own company and gazing through the window for distraction, when he heard a shout at a distance, and he beheld a figure emerge from an alley opposite the casement, with a sack under one arm, and several books heaped under the other. At his heels followed a train of ragged boys, shouting and hallooing, "The wizard! The wizard! Ah! Bah! The old devil's kin!" At this cry the dull neighbourhood seemed suddenly to burst forth into life. From the casements and thresholds of every house curious faces emerged, and many voices of men and women joined, in deeper bass, with the shrill tenor of the choral urchins, "The wizard! The wizard! Out at daylight!"

Adam Warner turned his face, wistfully perplexed, from side to side. He was very pale, but he spoke not, even when the children boldly stood in his way, pulled his robe and even struck at him. One went so far as to jump up and pluck his beard. At this last insult Adam Warner broke silence; but such was the sweetness of his mind that it was rather with pity than reproof in his voice that he gently rebuked the child.

"The wizard! The wizard!" was the only answer he received.

Adam shrugged his shoulders and strode on with so sudden a step that one of the smaller children, a rogue about eight years old, was thrown down at his feet and the rest gave way. But the poor man did not advance; instead, he took up the boy in his arms. On seeing this a simultaneous cry of horror broke from the assemblage.

"He is going to curse poor Tim!"

"My child, my boy!" shrieked a woman from one of the casements; "let go my child!"

On his part the boy kicked and shrieked lustily as Adam, bending his noble face tenderly over him, said: "Thou art not hurt, and I shall not harm thee."

While he spoke a storm of mud, sticks, bricks, stones from the enemy burst upon him. A stone struck him on the shoulder, and, too proud to show fear, he slowly made for his door.

Fortunately Sibyll and Marmaduke had heard the clamour and were ready to admit the old man and to close the door against the rush that followed.

The crowd increased. Stones flew through the window, and there was talk of setting fire to the house. The father of Tim, followed by his weeping wife, ran up waving a torch and the cry of "Fire the door!" was universal, in spite of Marmaduke's assurances to the crowd that Warner had befriended him as few would do.

In fact, the danger now grew imminent: several of the party were already piling straw and faggots against the threshold, and Marmaduke began to think the only chance of life to his host and Sibyll was in flight by some back way, when he beheld a man, clad somewhat in the fashion of a country yeoman, a formidable knotted club in his hand, pushing his way, with Herculean shoulders, through the crowd, and brandishing aloft his formidable weapon, he exclaimed: "What! In the devil's name, do you mean to get yourselves all hanged for riot? Do you think King Edward is as soft a man as King Henry was, and that he will suffer anyone but himself to set fire to people's houses in this way? By the blood of St. Thomas, I will brain the first man who advances a step—by way of preserving the neck of the rest!"

"A Robin! A Robin!" cried several of the mob. "'Tis our good friend Robin. Hearken to Robin. He is always right!"

"Ay, that I am!" quoth the defender. "You know that well enough. If I had my way the world should be turned upside down, but what the poor folk should get nearer to the sun! But what I say is this, never go against law, while the law is too strong. And it were a sad thing to see fifty fine fellows trussed up for burning an old wizard. So be off with you."

This address was received with a shout of approbation, and the danger was over; but two or three days later Sibyll suffered another fright. As she and Marmaduke were talking by a large oriel casement jutting over the street wild laughter and music made them both start, and there below, capering in their immodest dance, went the timbrel-girls.

But these creatures were rarely seen alone; they haunted parties of pomp and pleasure. So now, as they wheeled into the street, they heralded a goodly company of dames and cavaliers on horseback, darting round and round the riders, and holding out their instruments for largess.

Suddenly, as the company, two by two, paced up the street, Sibyll uttered a faint exclamation. Her eye rested upon one of the horsemen who rode last, and who seemed in earnest conversation with a dame, who, though scarcely in her first youth, excelled all her companions in beauty of face and grace of horsemanship. At the same moment the horseman looked up and gazed steadily at Sibyll, whose countenance grew pale and flushed in a breath. He slightly raised the plumed cap from his brow, inclined gravely to Sibyll, and turned once more to his companion.

The lynx eyes of the tymbesteres had seen the recognition.

"Ha, ha!" cried the leader, looking upwards towards the window and pointing her long arm at Sibyll:

"The cushat would mate
Above her state,
And she flutters her wings round the falcon's beak;
But death to the dove
Is the falcon's love—
Oh, sharp is the kiss of the falcon's beak!"

Before this rude song was ended Sibyll had vanished from the place; the cavalcade had disappeared, and the timbrel-players darted elsewhere to ply their discordant trade.

KING-MAKER AND KING

A DAY or two later Marmaduke Nevile, fully recovered, presented himself before the Earl of Warwick, arrayed for the occasion in new clothes which seemed gorgeous to his country-bred eyes. Through the narrow streets of London, filled with pedestrians, horsemen and an occasional huge litter for a lady or an old priest, he rode to the earl's house in Warwick Lane. On his way thither he marvelled at the extremely narrow and twisting streets, with their upper storeys, chiefly of wood, projecting far over the lower, and their open shops, with the 'prentices standing before them caps in hand to cry their masters' wares.

The exterior of Warwick House was of a grey but dingy stone, and presented a half-fortified and formidable appearance. In the courtyard Marmaduke dismounted, and saw that it swarmed with the more immediate retainers of the earl in scarlet jackets bearing his cognisance. Marmaduke was handed from a chamberlain to a page, who ascended a short flight of broad stairs and knocked gently on an arched door.

"Enter!" said a clear, loud voice, and the next moment Marmaduke was in the presence of the king-maker.

The Earl of Warwick was seated near a door that opened upon an inner court, or rather garden, overlooking the river Thames. The floor was strewed thick with dried rushes and odorous herbs; the furniture was scanty, but rich. Warwick himself, seated before a large cumbrous desk, was writing, but slowly and with pain, for he was a soldier rather than a scholar.

The earl was in the lusty vigour of his age. His hair, of the deepest black, was worn short, unlike the usual Court custom of long locks, and his forehead naturally lofty and majestic. The beard was closely shaven and left in all its remarkable beauty the contour of the oval face and strong jaw—strongly as if clasped in iron. Concluding his task the earl rose, and when seen standing his great stature actually startled his guest. Tall as Marmaduke was himself, the earl towered above him; yet his huge strength was combined with graceful lightness.

Marmaduke Nevile had never seen such a hero. Subdued and fascinated by the earl's first word, and that word was "Welcome!" he dropped on his knee, and kissing the hand extended to him, said: "Noble kinsman, in thy service and for thy sake, let me live and die!"

He could have said nothing more fortunate. Warwick was extremely sensitive to the admiration he excited, and from that moment was his young kinsman's friend.

"What are thy views and thy wishes, Marmaduke?" he asked, when he had read the letter from old Sir Guy Nevile.

"To be one of thy following, noble Warwick."

The earl explained that he was about to sail for France to arrange the marriage of the king's sister, and that he feared to leave Marmaduke without a guide; he therefore proposed placing him for the moment among Edward's gentlemen at the Tower, where the king was then residing. Having delighted Marmaduke with this promise, he next presented him to his two daughters, the Ladies Isabel and Anne Nevile, the one extremely haughty, the other soft and gentle, and then bade the young man follow him to the king. Fifty rowers awaited the earl in his huge gilt barge, hung with an awning of silk, and rowed them slowly down the river towards the Tower.

As they arrived the folk who were walking on the battlements set up a shout of "A Warwick—a Warwick! The stout earl and God bless him!" showing how much the king-maker was beloved.

They found the king in the gardens within the Tower walls. Edward was a great contrast to Warwick, whose clothes were rich, but manly and plain. The king, on the contrary, carried dress to a passion, and wore a gorgeous gown of womanly cut and many jewels, while his golden hair was strongly perfumed.

Yet, in spite of all this effeminacy, the appearance of Edward IV was *not* effeminate. From this it was preserved, not only by a stature little less commanding than that of Warwick himself, and of great strength and breadth of shoulder, but also by features, beautiful indeed, but pre-eminently masculine, and showing all the gallantry and daring characteristic of the hottest soldier, next to Warwick, and, without any exception, the ablest captain of the age.

The king willingly agreed to accept Marmaduke as one of his train, and the young man entered into Court life forthwith.

THE WARNERS AT COURT

While such was Marmaduke's fortune, an even more sudden rise to luxury and to success befell Sibyll Warner and her wise old father. For Adam Warner was sent to Court to interest the king with his curious new contrivance, the Eureka, and though Edward was more alarmed than attracted by an unlooked-for explosion which took place in the yet imperfect machine, the gifts and knowledge of the old man drew the notice of Jacquetta, Duchess of Bedford, the mother of the queen, and one of her many humble relations on whom Edward had showered favours, much to the displeasure of Warwick.

The duchess had already several alchemists at work on the problem of those times—the turning of iron into gold; and in the hope that Warner would be more successful than they and bring her great wealth by making the necessary discovery, she appointed him to her service, with residence at the Tower. Sibyll, who would not leave her father, was admitted among the ladies in attendance on Queen Elizabeth, and the gloomy and poverty-stricken old home was closed.

Here at Court Sibyll often met the handsome and good, but ambitious, Lord Hastings, and grew ever more deeply in love with him. But he, some years before, had given his whole heart to Katharine Nevile, Warwick's sister. He was then poor and obscure, and Katharine's father had parted the lovers and wed his daughter to the rich old Lord de Bonville; but Hastings still yearned after his early love, who was much at Court, and it seemed unlikely that he would ever stoop to the daughter of a poor gentleman like Warner.

Meanwhile Warwick had departed to France to arrange the royal marriage. He little knew that during his absence the king, urged on by his wife's kin, the Woodvilles, whose rise to power Warwick had always resisted, was planning to make his mission all in vain by promising his sister's hand to Charles of Burgundy, the bitter foe of France. The Court buzzed with schemes and counter-schemes, and Sibyll often sighed for the old life which was honest and peaceful, if full of care.

As for Adam, the furnace was still at work, the flame glowed, the bellows heaved, but these were no longer ministering to the service of a mighty and practical invention. The mathematician, the philosopher, had descended to the alchemist, engaged on a vain and money-loving quest.

Adam Warner knew that alchemy was unworthy of his gifts; yet by degrees it exercised its fascination over him, and he began to forget his so much greater Eureka. In his room in the Tower Nicholas Alwyn visited him one day; he had been sent by his master with jewels for the queen and craved for a sight of Sibyll, whom he secretly loved as she loved Hastings. Alwyn told her the story of Hastings' love for the Lady of Bonville, and had hardly concluded when Hastings himself came in.

"And how fares the grand secret, Master Warner?" he asked, with the familiarity of one accustomed to the place. "Sweet mistress, thou seemest lovelier to me in this dark chamber than outshining all in the galliard."

Alwyn, with a sombre brow, moved towards the door. He was due to show some of his craft to the Lady of Bonville.

"Oh fool that I was to—nay, I thought it never, I did but dream it," he muttered as he withdrew. "What wonder we traders hate these silken lords. But she—the poor maiden!—she

looked so haughty and so happy. This is early May; will she wear that look when the autumn leaves are strewn?"

THE RETURN OF THE KING-MAKER

Edward, who had ever secretly chafed at Warwick's power, saying he himself was no true king while the great earl was by, had concluded the treaty of alliance between Margaret and Charles of Burgundy. A great combat of knights had celebrated the occasion, and a huge banquet, in a splendid pavilion on the jousting-ground, followed the contest.

"And here, then," said Edward, as he put his lips to a gold goblet wrought with gems, and passed it to Anthony the Bastard, the Burgundian envoy, "here, count, we take the first wassail to the loves of Charles and Margaret!"

"And with those loves, king," said the count, "we bind for ever Burgundy and England. Woe to France!"

"Ay, woe to France!" exclaimed Edward.

As the king spoke there was heard gently upon the smooth turf the sound of the hoofs of steeds. A moment more, and from the outskirts of the scene of revel, where the king's guards were stationed, there arose a long, loud shout. Nearer and nearer came the hoofs of the steeds; they paused.

Marmaduke Nevile, as a gentleman-in-waiting, drew aside the curtain of the pavilion; and, as he uttered a name that paled the cheeks of all who heard, the Earl of Warwick entered the royal presence.

The earl's dress was soiled by travel; the black plume on his cap was broken; his horseman's boots were white with dust; for a messenger from his brother Montagu, bearing news of the Court intrigues, had made him hasten his journey from Dover, where he had disembarked. Yet, as he entered, before the majesty of his mien all, even the gorgeous Edward seemed dwarfed into common men! About the man there was an unmistakable sovereignty. A deep silence succeeded an exclamation from Edward, and all was indeed very still.

Warwick doffed his cap, and, approaching the king with slow and grave respect, announced to him the success of his mission in France and the favourable terms he had obtained from King Louis on condition of the marriage of Princess Margaret.

Edward was sorely embarrassed, but reassuming the external dignity which rarely forsook him replied: "Cousin, since thy departure reasons of State have changed our purpose, and we will now that our sister Margaret shall wed with Burgundy."

"And this to me, king!" exclaimed the earl, all his passions at once released. "This to me! Nay, frown not, Edward—I am of the race of those who, greater than kings, have built thrones and toppled them! I tell thee, thou hast misused mine honour, and belied thine own—thou hast debased thyself in juggling me, delegated as the representative of thy royalty!"

The king, with a rage no less than Warwick's, threatened him with instant arrest, but was dissuaded by some of his followers, who well knew how the earl was loved by the people.

"My liege," continued Warwick, with a disdainful gesture, "I lay down mine offices, and I leave it to Your Grace to account to the ambassadors of France. I shall vindicate myself to their king. And now I shall depart for my hall of Middleham, unarmed and unattended. Let who dare arrest me and attend me to the Tower." Haughtily he bowed his head, and raising it again looked around: "I await your Grace's pleasure."

"Begone where thou wilt, earl. From this day Edward IV reigns alone," said the king. Warwick turned and strode out of the royal tent, returned, with his usual cheerful courtesy, the welcome of the crowd outside, and rode away with his single squire.

But he was weary after his long ride from Dover, and soon halted to drink at a wayside rivulet. He was aroused by a quick footstep, and beheld Marmaduke Nevile at his side.

"Oh, Warwick," said Marmaduke, with simple eloquence, "send me not from thy side! I have no love, but that which is best of all, to a brave man—love and faith for a hero-chief! Where thy fortunes there be my humble fate—to rise or fall with thee!"

"Man, I accept thy loyalty!" exclaimed Warwick, starting to his feet; and Marmaduke followed the great man to Middleham.

SIBYLL AND HASTINGS

From that fatal hour, although the quarrel between the king and the most powerful of his subjects was patched up after Warwick had spent several months in retirement at Middleham, the feeling between the two was never the same again.

The following spring the king visited Middleham, was reconciled to the earl, and Warwick was reinstated in the offices which gave him, apparently, the supreme rule in all England. But angry feelings still remained, and the king's mind was more and more poisoned against Warwick by the members of the queen's family. He sent the earl to govern Calais, and Margaret, the wife of the dethroned Henry VI, who plotted to restore her husband to the throne, tried to persuade the powerful earl to join her cause.

Meanwhile there were rumours that the commons would rise against unjust taxation.

Amid all these turmoils the Warners were happy; for Sibyll saw with joy that Lord Hastings was beginning to turn lovingly towards her, though he could not yet quite forget Katharine de Bonville; and Hastings, finding how much Adam had come to loathe the seeking to make gold, gained the king's permission for him to resume work on his steam-engine. The old man knew not the hate he had thus acquired, for London traders, to whom the king had shown the Eureka, feared that there would be no work left for them to do if the wizard were allowed

to perfect his devil's machine, as they called it; and these prejudices were skilfully fed by the jealousy of Friar Bungey, another sorcerer employed by the Duchess of Bedford, who hated Warner for his greater gifts. The fat friar also coveted the model, for he believed that it had magic powers. He was in league with the timbrel-girls, and meant to do Adam a mischief.

One day it chanced that Sibyll encountered Hastings in the walk that girded the ramparts of the Tower.

"I was thinking of thee, fair damsel," he said, "and I was comparing thee to others who dwell in the world's high places."

Sibyll smiled faintly and answered: "Provoke not too much the aspiring folly of my nature. Content is better than ambition."

"Thou ownest thy ambition?" asked Hastings curiously.

"Oh, methinks," said Sibyll earnestly, "that a woman's true ambition would rise the bravest when, in the very sight of death itself, she would not fear to walk to the grave and heaven by the side of her dearest."

The answer struck home to the noblest side of Hastings' nature.

"Oh, Sibyll!" he exclaimed hastily and passionately, "dare I guess at thy heart? Sibyll, thou lovest me! Oh, Sibyll, say that thou wilt be my wife!"

The girl was so overcome with joy that she would have fallen but for the loving arms that circled her. Suddenly, from a tavern without the fortress, just opposite to them, sallied a troop of half-drunken soldiers, followed by the tymbesteres. A loud laugh rang out, and Sibyll heard a song she knew:

"Ha! death to the dove
Is the falcon's love—
Oh, sharp is the kiss of the falcon's beak!"

A moment later Hastings was called away by a messenger from the king. Rebellion had broken out in the north, and the king and his army set forth immediately to quell it. In this enterprise they had less success than they expected, and it was not until the Earl of Warwick was unwillingly sent for, and had addressed the rebels where they were assembled at Olney, that they could be induced to disperse.

The earl soon found that the promises he had made to the rebels of better treatment, in the king's name, had small likelihood of being fulfilled by Edward; and the final flame was set a little later to his long-smouldering wrath against the sovereign he himself had put upon the throne. Edward had requested that the Lady Anne Nevile, Warwick's daughter, might remain at Court with the queen; but one day he so far forgot himself as to insult and frighten the gentle lady. To Sibyll, who had been appointed by the queen to be her waiting-woman, Lady Anne ran in terror. Sibyll and Adam protected her against the anger of the king, and helped her to escape from the Tower to her father at dead of night.

This insult to his favourite daughter and to the proud name of Warwick the earl never forgot or forgave. He could support Edward no longer, and when he learnt that Lady Anne and young Edward, the son of Henry VI, loved each other and would fain wed, he consented with a heavy heart to humble himself to Margaret of Anjou and to help her to drive Edward IV from the English throne.

DANGER!

The king took fright at the serious consequences of his rudeness to his noble guest. Anxious to hush it up as far as possible, he remembered that Adam and Sibyll possessed his secret, and resolved to banish them from the Tower, for he knew that the testimony of a shunned and abhorred wizard would cease to be of weight as soon as Adam was deprived of royal favour.

He gave orders for a boat to be in readiness by the gate of St. Thomas, summoned Adam into his presence, and said briefly: "Master Warner, the London mechanics cry so loudly against thine invention for lessening labour and starving the poor that I yield to the voice of my people. Go home, then, at once; the queen dispenses with thy fair daughter's service—the damsel accompanies thee."

So father and daughter returned to the ruinous house and the humble services of old Madge, and were not ill-content, though Sibyll missed Hastings.

One morning, at the hostelry of Master Sancroft, close to their home, many soldiers, returned in triumph from the rebellion, were drinking in the coarse, noisy company of the timbrel-girls. These women had followed the army, both because they liked the soldiers and because, in their greed for gold, they would rob the dead bodies that always strewed a battlefield.

Friar Bungey was among the drinkers, and great was his joy when the talk turned to Adam Warner and his daughter.

"Did he not devise a horrible engine for the destruction of the poor?" asked a mechanic, father of the boy Tim. "An engine that was to do all the work in England by the devil's help? Master Warner sets his imps a-churning mischief to us all."

The gossips stretched their necks to catch sight of the house of so evil a man.

"See," said the baker, "the smoke still curls from the roof-top. I heard he has come back."

"Come back!" cried the fierce mechanic. "The owl hath slept close in his roost. If the king did not protect the vile sorcerer I would free the land from his devilries."

"The king cares not a straw for Master Warner or his invention, my son," Friar Bungey answered loudly. "Wax wobiscum."

With this salutation, far from accurate, for the friar was an ignorant man, he departed, but was detained outside by Graul Skellet, the leader of the timbrel-girls.

"A word, friar, a word," she said. "Wouldst thou have Warner burned, drowned or torn piecemeal? He hath a daughter, too, who once

sought to mar our trade with her gittern; a daughter whom I last saw in sarcenet and lawn, with a great lord for her sweetheart." The tymbestere's eyes shone with malignant envy as she added: "Graul Skellet loves not wenches who have lords for their sweethearts and yet who shrink from the tymbesteres as the sound from the leper."

"Serve me in this," answered the friar in a low voice.

That night, unconscious of danger, Adam and his daughter mounted to their sleeping apartments, where Sibyll stayed a while talking to Madge, and looking through the window into the sweetness of spring outside. Suddenly Madge uttered a cry of alarm, and pointed to something dusk and dwarf-like which leaped lightly into the garden and approached the open door.

"Hist!" said the boy, entering. It was Tim, who had always remembered Warner's kindness. "I'm in time to save you. They'll break in here—perhaps burn—father and all the neighbours are preparing. The tymbesteres are to give note. When you hear their bells tinkle run for your lives through the garden into the fields. Quick!"

He vanished as rapidly as he spoke. Madge ran for Warner and a light. In two minutes, as they stood ready for flight, they heard the clash of timbrels and a fierce yell which filled the street.

"But the Eureka—my hope—my mind's child!" exclaimed Adam, halting suddenly.

"Eh-eh," said Madge, pushing him forward. "It is too heavy to move. I will stay to guard it; they bear me no grudge."

The yells grew louder. Sibyll and her father hurried forth through the garden gate into the quiet fields, and made good their escape. Madge returned to the house and the turret chamber where the Eureka was. And there the mob found her, guarding her master's treasure. It was not until they had cruelly dragged her forth and drowned her as a witch in the nearest pond that they could obtain possession of the machine. Those were violent and superstitious days.

THE BATTLE OF BARNET

It was a lovely summer evening and Sibyll and her father sat contentedly in an upper room in a retired farmhouse near Barnet. This had been their home for some months since the day of their flight, when after many adventures they had been found by Lord Hastings as he returned to London after putting down a rebel outbreak. Fearful for their safety in London, Hastings had installed his sweetheart and her father in this quiet retreat, where he often visited them.

But as yet there was no thought of his wedding Sibyll. He came this evening with the tidings that the king inflexibly refused his consent to such a match; if he married, notwithstanding, then he would lose the royal favour and his place at Court. Hastings was too ambitious to contemplate such a fate, and he was beginning to wish he had never so impulsively asked the wizard's daughter to marry him.

That night, when he returned to London, he learnt of something which moved him greatly. The Lord of Bonville was dead, and Katharine was a widow who might be sought in marriage. Fond as he was of Sibyll, Hastings had never ceased to care for his first love. He now resolved to court her, but as yet he dreaded telling Sibyll of his decision.

Meanwhile sterner matters were afoot, for Lord Warwick landed in England and declared the imprisoned Henry its king. Then began again the weary Wars of the Roses which cleft the country in half. Edward was driven from the kingdom, and Henry VI took his place as sovereign. Greater than ever seemed the power of Warwick, who had made yet another king. Peace appeared to settle on the land.

But the country was divided against itself. Many folk still favoured the Yorkists and desired their return. In the gusty month of March a single ship struggled to land in the Humber, bearing Edward and a band of gallant followers. They raised the Yorkist standard and marched towards London, gathering adherents as they went.

Warwick promptly raised forces to crush his former king and started on the northward march. The two armies met for battle at Barnet, near the farm where the Warners were living.

Raw, cold and dismal dawned the morning of the fourteenth of April, the Easter Sabbath. Along the ranks of his army rode King Edward, heedless of the arrows from Warwick's archers and the flash and roar of the bombards.

"Englishmen and friends," said Edward, "to bold deeds go but few words. Before you is the foe! My cause is yours and England's." Edward's tiger eyes sparkled. "I say to you—slay all! Charge!"

Then with a wild shout, on through the hail of the arrows, on through the glare of the bombards, advanced Edward's centre against the array of Warwick.

By the churchyard of Hadley, which overlooked the battleground, was a troop in complete armour, upon horses pawing impatiently. They surrounded a man upon a sorry palfrey—that man was Henry the Sixth. In the same space stood Friar Bungey, his foot upon the Eureka, and near him, under a gaunt, leafless tree, a rope round his neck, was Adam Warner, with Sibyll still faithful to his side, heeding not the guns, her whole fear concentrated upon her father.

Upon this eminence these lookers-on stood aloof.

"Holy Father!" exclaimed the kingly saint. "And this is Easter Sabbath, thy most solemn day of peace!"

Once more misfortune had fallen upon the Warners. Seeing that a battle was coming the timbrel-girls had wended their way in the wake of Warwick's army, chuckling over the spoils

the battlefields would yield them, and passing close to the farm Graul Skellet had discovered her two enemies in their retreat. Quickly she had sent word to Friar Bungey, who obtained an order for the arrest of the wizard—the friar was a man of power with the authorities—and had now brought them hither until he knew the outcome of the battle and whether it would be safe to wreak his vengeance on the pair.

All eyes now turned to the fight. It was soon apparent that the tide of warfare was turning against Warwick. And the earl himself well knew, and had proclaimed to his followers beforehand, that here he must conquer or here he must die.

In vain the earl dashed hither and thither on his great black war-horse, exhorting his men to further valour and setting them the example in many a feat of courage. Slowly Edward's eager army pressed them back and overwhelmed them. Warwick saw that defeat was certain.

"Knights and earls," said he, dismounting and partially raising his visor as he turned to the horsemen, "let those who will fly with Lord Montagu! Let those who, in a just cause, never despair of victory, nor, even at the worst, fear to face their Maker, fresh from the glorious death of heroes, dismount with me!" Every knight sprang from his steed, Montagu the first. "Comrades!" continued the earl, then addressing the retainers, "when the children fight for a father's honour, the father flies not from the peril into which he has drawn the children. What to me were life, stained by the blood of mine own beloved retainers, basely deserted by their chief?"

In this interval a burst of sunshine revealed to King Henry, where he stood, the dispersal of his friends. Close by gleamed the robes of the tymbesteres, pressing nearer and nearer, as wolves who scent blood.

"Certes," quoth one of the guard, "nothing now lacks to King Edward's triumph, except the death of the earl."

"Infamous necromancer, hear that!" cried Bungey to Adam. The friar made a sigr to a soldier who stood behind the scholar, and the man silently drew the end of the rope which girded Adam's neck round a bough of the leafless tree.

All strained their eyes again on the battlefield.

Edward, surrounded by Hastings and his principal captain, scanned the battle for his chief foe. "This day," he said, "brings no victory, assures no crown, if Warwick escape alive. To you, Lovell and Ratcliffe, I intrust two hundred knights; your sole care—the head of the rebel earl!"

And a few minutes afterwards Warwick saw three lines of the foe converging towards him, surrounding him and his scanty band on all sides. He planted his archers skilfully among the trees and stood ready for his last fight.

Kissing his gallant war-horse, he plunged his dagger into a vital part—Saladin should not live to be captured. Then the enemy were upon them. In front rose, literally, mounds of the slain; for round the two brothers to the last had gathered the brunt of war, and they towered now almost solitary amidst the wrecks of battle.

"God assoil thee, brother mine," said Warwick to Montagu. "Christ receive our souls!"

The next moment the Yorkists were upon them, calling on them to yield.

"We yield not, sir knight," Montagu answered calmly.

Swiftly he was beaten to his knee—Warwick covered him with his body—a hundred blades gleamed round the earl. The conflict had ceased. Side by side, axe and sword still gripped in their iron hands, lay Montagu and the king-maker. And the loud cry arose: "King Edward comes! Long live the king!"

PEACE AT LAST

The king, immediately after the victory, rode back to London to announce his triumph. Henry VI was now sadly led back to his prison, and to the spot whence he had watched the battle the corpses of Warwick and Montagu were for the moment removed. At that same place met Alywn, now no longer a 'prentice, but a goldsmith on his own account, and Marmaduke Nevile, who had long since been made a knight.

Returning from the battle they paused a moment where knights and warriors thickest grouped, in soldier-like awe and sadness, round the hero-brothers. Suddenly they saw a band of timbrel-women dancing round a leafless tree, and chanting some wild and joyous doggerel.

"What obscene and ill-seasoned revelry is this?" said the trader, to a gaping yeoman.

"They are but dancing, poor girls, round the wicked wizard whom Friar Bungey caused to be strangled—and his witch daughter."

A chill foreboding seized upon Alwyn; he darted forward, scattering peasant and tymbestere, with his yet bloody sword. His feet stumbled against some broken fragments; it was the poor Eureka, shattered at last.

From the leafless tree was suspended the dead body of a man, beneath lay a female, dead too; but whether by the hand of man or the mercy of Heaven there was no sign to tell. Scholar and Child, Knowledge and Innocence, alike were cold; the grim Age had devoured them as it devours ever those before, as behind, its march—and confounds, in one common doom, the too guileless and the too wise!

DO & DARE
at the Exhibition
Guide
RUNABOUTS
2/6 PER HOUR
"Come along Do, you've got the money
We simply must go on this dear little motor"
"It hasn't been taught to go up stairs" said Do
"Hey Up! Mr Black"
Bang! into the Cookery Section where the Chef was showing how to make Omelettes!
"Awfully jolly the Zoo Bridge" chuckled Dare
"I say," enquired Do, "How do you stop this thing?"
"It stopped all right" shivered Dare, "But it's a silly sort of way"
G. E. Christie

THE SILVER STAR FAIRY

(*Drawn by Helen Jacobs*)

The Scarlet Dragon-Fly

By

ESTRITH MANSFIELD

I

Under the Tree

"HERE he is! Here he is, Will—coming round this side!"

"No, he isn't! No, he isn't! I've got him here! Look! Quick, Beau!"

Beau crept up the bank and dropped down beside her brother, craning her neck over the edge of the miniature cliff above the stagnant pond, which was covered with a sheet of lovely green duckweed.

"Oh! isn't he beautiful! Just like a poppy! I'm sure he must have been a poppy, Will, and the fairies gave him wings!"

"Fairies, silly!" Will was superior, being a brother. "He's a knight in scarlet mail, just like I'm going to have when we can leave off herding stupid geese and pigs and find our home again."

Beau sighed, and away skimmed the glorious dragon-fly, a shimmering streak of scarlet over the moss-green pool in the blazing June sunshine. Both Will and Beau strained themselves still farther over the edge of the pond, a big piece of soil crumbled and caved away under them, and, with a united yell, in they went!

Luckily the water was only two or three feet deep, but there was plenty of black mud at the bottom, and they scrambled out, gasping and spluttering, to stare at each other in dismay, and then to drop on the grass and laugh till the tears made pale streaks down their dirty faces! After all, it was better to laugh than to cry, even if this dreadful calamity had happened on their hard-earned holiday, and, what was worse, spoiled the only decent clothes they had!

"We can never go into Oxenford now!" said Beau, growing sober.

"All my fault," muttered Will. "I called you up on the wretched bank."

"Oh, but I should have come if you hadn't!" Beau would not let her adored brother blame himself. They were orphans, and thought the world of each other, which was very fortunate, because nobody else cared about them, except the old farmer and his wife for whom they worked, although Will was only twelve and Isabeau just ten and a half. They were always hoping that they should one day grow rich and be able to find their own dear home again, but where it was they had no idea, and could not recollect much about it, except that it was a long way from Oxfordshire. They had had a lovely mother with golden hair, whose name had been Isabelle, and their father was a tall knight called William, who used to wear glittering armour and give them rides up before him on his great bay charger, Red Dragon. But this was all that either Will or Isabeau could remember, because of the dreadful things which happened when they had been carried away—a battle, a terrible fire, fierce, scowling men who had bundled brother and sister up before them on their horses, and then a lot of misery and cold and hunger. They had been carried a long, long way, but everything was so jumbled up in their little minds that they never knew how they got amongst some rough charcoal-burners, from whom they were presently taken by an old peasant woman, who gave them good food and some new clothes (although she was very poor herself), and they stayed with her for a long time and helped to look after her goats and pigs. But after several years the good old woman died, having told Will and Isabeau how to get to her sister, who was the wife of a tenant of the Abbot of Eynsham, and who would be glad to employ them.

So Will and Isabeau trudged up from Gloucestershire to Eynsham, two lonely little wayfarers, and went to work as pig-boy and goose-girl for Mistress Pernell and her husband, Master Tim Longshanks, and this bright June morning was their first holiday, and now it was spoilt!

"No use crying over spilt milk," said Will, stripping off his red jerkin to dry.

"No," sighed Isabeau, stooping down to wash the mud off her face. Then she suddenly started and clutched her brother.

"Look, Will! There's a man!"

"Where?"

"In that dark place under that big drooping willow."

"He's got a horse!" said Will, screwing up his eyes to see better. "What is he doing with him?"

Screened by a sallow bush, both watched.

"I do declare he's giving him a feed!" whispered Will. (Why he should have whispered then he often wondered afterwards.)

"Let's get away," urged Isabeau in the same tone. "He has got a nasty, fierce face, and see how he waits and listens. He may try to hurt us if he sees us."

But Will was fascinated by the stealthy movements of the half-hidden man across the pond, and soon Isabeau forgot her fears in watching him attending his horse, rebuckling the saddle-girths, looking at the animal's shoes and trying each to see if it was on tightly, and then sitting down as if to wait, with folded arms and his back against the tree trunk.

"He's running away from somebody or something, or I'm a dudman!" whispered Will. "He has got some more corn in a bag at his saddle-bow."

Just then a strong smell of burning reached them on the light easterly breeze.

The man under the willow appeared to smell it too. He lifted his head and sniffed the air; then they saw him smile grimly.

II

Up the Rope

"WHATEVER *can* be on fire?" whispered Isabeau. "Let's go and see, Will."

They crept away, taking care that a screen of bushes hid them from the suspicious character under the tree. When they reached open ground they saw a great cloud of black smoke sweeping towards them from a village some half a mile away. As they stared, the wind parted the black billows and showed a tall tower with flames shooting from its lower windows.

"It's Cassington Castle!" gasped Isabeau. "And only this morning I heard Mistress Pernell say that Lady Montacute had come back! Oh, I hope she isn't inside now!"

Will started across the meadow at a loping trot. Isabeau caught his hand and ran as well as she could in her wet clothes. They jumped several ditches, and then struck off to the left to reach a plank bridge over the little river Evenlode, which was hurrying then, just as it hurries still, to reach the Thames. By now the smoke had got into their eyes and throats, and they could hear the roar of the fire and distinguish shrill cries and loud shouts.

"Oh, how dreadful!" gasped Isabeau, as they raced round a bend of the village street and came upon the terrible scene. A crowd of people were pushing round the gateway in the high wall which encircled the castle courtyard. Will and his sister worked their way through until they stood in the open space stretching between the great flaming central keep and the outbuildings inside the wall. Gripping each other, they stared up, fascinated. The people round them were rushing about, bewildered; the women and even some of the men were sobbing and praying aloud.

"What are they saying?—what is it, Will?" cried Isabeau.

"Why!" he answered, pulling her after him, "'tis Lady Montacute—she's in the tower!" He let go his sister, and rushed towards a group of men with a long thin rope between them. They were all staring up at a barred window in the second story of the tower while tears ran down their rough faces. At the window stood a grey-haired lady, half-hidden with smoke pouring out of the openings below, yet Will could see that she was not screaming nor wringing her hands, but working away trying to loosen the iron bars. The men had carried the rope up to the window by means of a bolt secured to one end of it, and then shot from a cross-bow; this Lady Montacute had fastened round the small stone pillar in the centre, but yet she could not escape because of the bars. The men below were trying to get a small stable-lad to climb the rope to the window. This the boy was far too terrified to do, although a groom was belabouring him with all his might. Will rushed up and snatched at the groom's sleeve.

"What do you want?" he cried.

The men all answered together: "Why, the little coward 'ud sooner see our lady burn than climb that rope and knock them rusty bars out o' that window! Th' rope's too thin to bear any of us but him——"

"I'll go!" Will snatched a hammer

"The big groom helped his mistress through the window, and started down the double rope" (p. 76)

Drawn by C. E. Brock

from another man, thrust it through his leather belt, and started up. Isabeau, with her heart beating as though it was in her throat, stood with clasped hands, praying to all the saints she could think of. The fire roared more loudly every moment, and the heat was dreadful. An outbuilding at right angles to the tower was burning too, and the flames leapt like scarlet monsters against the lovely summer sky.

Will was still toiling up. The men below yelled encouragements. Every other member of the household except its mistress seemed to be in safety in the courtyard, and all the women and children were weeping and praying for her together.

Will had still a long way to go. Would he ever do it in time? Through the smoke he could see the brave white face of Lady Montacute, smiling down at him. His arms ached frightfully, his head swam round, he was gasping for breath, and it seemed as if he *must* fall, but that smile heartened him. He felt himself a knight-errant and battled on. Then, while a roar of cheering came up from below, he reached the window and struggled up, exhausted, on the sill.

III

Honour First

But the next moment Will was wrenching away at the old iron bars with all his might. They were in two sections, one each side the little pillar, and he had to reach round this to reach the farther side, because he had no room to work on those close to him. Lady Montacute's hands came through and gripped his jerkin.

"Brave boy!" she said. "I'll hold you."

Will heaved and strained with all his strength. He could feel the breath of the fire coming out from behind her. The room must be burning! Would he ever be in time? Fortunately, the gratings had been there many years, and the weather had eaten away both the iron and the mortar round it. At last, out came the bars and shot down into the gulf below.

"Haul up th' rope and have it double!" roared a voice. "Then I'll come!"

Will pulled until the other end was in his hands. He had no sooner made this fast than the big groom came swarming up, helped his mistress through the window, buckled a broad strap round them both, and started down the double rope.

Not a moment too soon! The floor of the room fell in with an awful sound, great flames poured through the window, and Will had only time to slide down before the rope, burnt through, came tumbling after him!

Isabeau flung herself at her brother, sobbing with joy. Lady Montacute drew Will towards her and kissed his forehead, in spite of the mud and smoke. Then, suddenly, she gripped his shoulders, staring down into his face with a fierce look.

"Your name, boy? Your name?"

"W—Will!" he stammered in answer, rather scared because he was still exhausted and trembling; but the next moment Lady Montacute drew back.

"Honour first," she murmured, and turned round to her people, asking in a ringing voice: "Where is our prisoner?"

Everybody stared; even the castle seneschal did not speak and looked dreadfully worried. Then Peter the groom burst out:

"Why, lady, we all hopes as he's gone up in smoke like he deserves!"

Lady Montacute flashed a withering look at them. "It will be an ill day for us if anything has happened to Sir John Maltravers. I promised my husband to guard him with my life! I went to see that the warder was on duty at his chamber door, and the fire caught me. He has escaped, and this is his work!" She looked at her home, going up in flames, then back at her people. They were all outside the court now, driven by the increasing heat. "See if a horse is missing."

The grooms and boys fell over one another. Peter was back first. "Yes! Gay Boy is gone, madame! If I could lay my hands on that black scoundrel——"

"Hush! Go saddle the others and search. Bring me Poppet—I come with you. Hasten!" she flashed at them. "Your lord's honour is at stake! Pray the saints we find which way he went!"

And now light came to Will and Isabeau as they still stood near Lady Montacute. Both exclaimed together, then Will stepped forward and told of the man hiding by the lonely pond.

"It is he! Blessings on you, children!" She turned to her men again. Before five minutes were up, Will and Isabeau were running beside her stirrup across the meadows.

Very soon they stopped to form a plan of campaign.

"He intends to wait till night, no doubt," said the lady, "but he will make for the ford when we disturb him. There is a track running towards the river from that pond, through a spinney, and another path branching off towards Eynsham. Now if we could force him to go towards the town——"

"Let me try, madame!" cried Will. "If you would——"

All the men frowned, especially the seneschal, but their lady only had to look at them! Then she listened to Will. The end of it was that in a short time he was hidden in the undergrowth just at the parting of the paths, while Isabeau, thrilling with pride and fear, was likewise concealed a few yards farther up the track leading to the pond.

They had not long to wait. A thunder of hoofs came down to where Will lay. He crouched, ready, his heart-beats seeming as loud as the drumming hoofs. He could just see the bay horse and dark-faced rider when, with a wild screech, Isabeau dashed out of her hiding-place. The horse, terrified, crashed into the bushes, and came on like a mad thing. Then Will bounded into view at the opening of the river track, waving his red jerkin and jumping and yelling like fury. Poor Gay Boy, wild with terror and quite out of control, fled down the other path, put his foot in a rabbit-hole, and flung his rider over his head just as Lady Montacute's men rushed out of their ambush.

"Sir John Maltravers is a very wicked man, and our young King Edward the Third has given him into my husband's charge," explained Lady Montacute as they went back across the meadows. "I cannot tell you how grateful I am to you both, and especially to Will——" She broke off and slipped down from her palfrey. Her men had gone on with the prisoner. Will and Isabeau looked at her. Both felt curiously excited. Isabeau said afterwards that she *knew* something was going to happen. Lady Montacute put her hand on a shoulder of each. Her sweet face was both sad and terribly eager.

"Now, children, tell me your names and everything you can remember about yourselves. Think hard and only repeat what you are quite sure of, for Our Lady's sake!"

So Will told. At the end Lady Montacute's face was dead white. She could hardly breathe. They caught a few words she was saying:

"Will—after my son William. And—he told me he had called his baby girl Isabeau because her mother's name was Isabelle and mine was Elizabeth—meaning that he had three fair Elizabeths, he said."

She took something from her gown. It was a little golden-hilted dagger in an enamelled sheath. She held it out to Will.

"Look carefully. Speak slowly. Have you ever seen that before?"

Will took it, stared, then started. Isabeau clung to him.

"Oh, I remember!" he burst out. "'Tis father's! Here's the red griffin's head he used to show me when I rode in front of him on Red Dragon! And here's the notch I made, cutting a stick with it, and father *was* cross! Oh, I can remember ever so much now!" He looked up. Great tears ran down Lady Montacute's face.

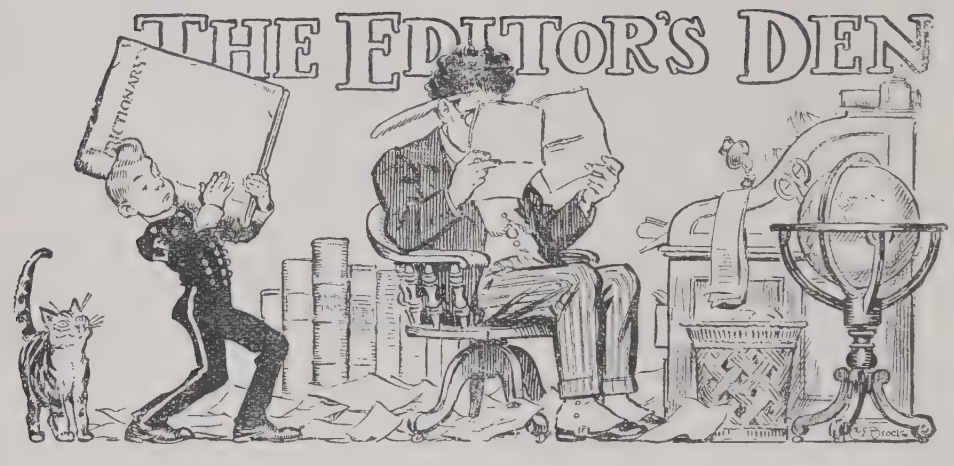
"Even his horse's name!" she murmured. Then she bent forward and gathered them both in her arms, crying: "Children! Children, I am your grandmother!"

When they heard how an enemy had killed their father and mother and burnt the castle, and how their grandparents had been searching for them ever since, both Will and Isabeau were too bewildered for words. And then, when they did realize their good fortune, they could not speak for joy! Never to go hungry nor ragged, nor work in the fields any more, and to have found this dear lovely grandmother and a grandfather who was longing for them! I am afraid I must say that even Will cried.

"And all because we came round by that old pond this morning!" he said at last.

"No," laughed Isabeau. "You forget, Will. It was all because of that dear scarlet dragon-fly!"

Next Month—"In the Hands of the Red Men," by E. Vaughan-Smith.



THE MAGIC CARPET

Spring Cleaning

"IS it really necessary this year?" your Editor asked doubtfully. "Seeing that it is a new house, and we have not long been in, couldn't we be spared spring cleaning for once?"

"Certainly not," replied Mrs. Editor. "I never did! And, by the way, when we are spring cleaning we must certainly get a new carpet for the lounge. I told you from the first that a carpet that is red will never go with a blue and orange room. Why, even Covers Man or Uncle Useful could have put you right there!"

"Certainly, certainly!" I said soothingly. "Now you come to mention it, red does not particularly go with orange and blue, but we had the red carpet on hand, and I thought, in view of the expense—— However, of course we must get another carpet if you say so. What should the colour be, anyhow?"

"Oh," replied Mrs. Editor, "orange with a touch of blue, or blue with a touch of orange, of course. It is perfectly simple, and on your way to the Den you might call in at one or two carpet shops and see what they have."

"Why, certainly," I said dutifully. Why is it when you put up a new house the old furniture has all to be changed? However, we shall be settled one of these days, I suppose. So on my way to the Den that morning I looked in at a carpet shop and asked for an orange carpet with blue bits in it.

"Orange carpet?" queried the man doubtfully. "Why, I don't think we've got one."

I was disappointed, and hurried off to the Den. There was a great pile of letters from readers, about the Nature Club, books, pets, also trouble of different kinds, for Uncle Useful was late with his copy, as usual, and the Art Department threatened to go on strike. However, at lunch time I had a very light meal and hurried off to another carpet shop.

Choosing a Carpet

"Orange carpet with some blue?" answered the shopman doubtfully. "I'm afraid——"

"Or blue with orange splashes?" I asked.

"Er—come this way."

I came this way, and the man made me sit down on a little chair in front of a big stack of carpets.

"Hi, Jerry!" he called, and another man, who evidently rejoiced in the name of Jerry, came and helped him to turn over. They started on the top of the pile, gave two flaps to each carpet and so turned it over. The first was crimson with mauve trimmings, and the second green with purple patches, and the third pink with bluish blotches and brown blobs. But none of them were orange.

So the shopman and Jerry turned and turned, and I watched and watched until my eyes ached. Finally the man had an inspiration.

"What you want, sir," he said, "is the new tango colour just in," and he produced a sample bit of a glorious tango colour.

"I'll take it along and try it," I said, and had the thing packed up.

It seemed quite light at first, but by the time I got home that roll of carpet was as heavy as lead. We tried it after supper on the lounge floor, on the top of the red carpet.

"Ugh!" said Mrs. Editor, "it kills everything else. Take it back!"

So I took it back, and went to another shop.

"Orange and blue?" said the manager. "I don't know that—— But just step this way, sir," and he led me to another little seat alongside another huge stack of carpets.

"Mr. Tomlinson!" he shouted, and a big, beefy sort of man stepped forward and helped to flap the carpets over.

After ten minutes of flapping I had a headache from watching the colours, and a cold in my nose from the draught they made turning over those wretched carpets. Finally, however, we came across a perfectly beautiful carpet, mostly blue, but with dear little twiggle bits in all sorts of colours.

"The very thing," I sighed. "Can you send it in the morning?"

Another Strike

They said they would see what they could do, and I hurried off to the Den. Here I found Covers Man awaiting me, looking very grim. He informed me that as he had come to the end of his ideas he wished to warn me that he was going on strike at the end of the week, and thereafter I could find my own covers.

Of course, this made me very unhappy, but at the end of the day I hurried home and found that the new carpet had come.

Mrs. Editor, however, said it was too blue.

"Well, I replied, nettled like, "I think you had better come and choose a carpet for yourself!"

"I think perhaps it would be as well," Mrs. Editor retorted.

Sure enough Mrs. Editor came to town. She started early and went to —— and —— and —— (see advertisement pages). Just before lunch time she came to the Den, so we went and had a nice lunch together and felt more cheerful.

The Very Thing

After lunch we went to still another carpet place, this time together. It was a big place, and held enough carpets to clothe the streets from Westminster Abbey to Ludgate Hill. We sat on two little chairs and they flapped carpets at us until Mrs. Editor sneezed and I—— Well, I was used to it by now.

But still we didn't find a carpet we liked.

Then the shopman put his hand to his brow and thought greatly.

"Ah! I think I have the very thing," he said finally.

We were very glad.

He led us to another part of the establishment, where the carpets were rolled up into bundles instead of laid in a stack. He went to one corner of the room and very reverently lifted one down.

"The very thing," he muttered. "Here, Jones, give a hand."

The brawny youth whose name was Jones gave both hands and a foot, and between them they laid the carpet on the floor.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Editor.

"Ah!" I exclaimed.

"A real Turkey carpet, just imported," said the shopman in a lowered tone. "Look at the colours. Look at the pattern. Will last you a lifetime, too. And there isn't another like it in London!"

We looked. It had a border of terra cotta, with sage green, and blue notches. The inside, however, was a lovely creamy orange, with fantastic designs in blue and green and other colours.

"I believe it's the very thing," remarked Mrs. Editor.

"Lovely," I admired.

So we inquired the price. This proved to be high, but I calculated that if I had two rolls and a piece of cheese for lunch now on until 1927, and only took the car out once a fortnight instead of every week, and had a week's holiday every two years, and chocolate twice weekly instead of every night, and only went to the pictures once in four months, I could more than pay for it. So I told them to send it home.

It did not come for two or three days, but finally on the Saturday the railway van toiled up the hill and left the carpet on the step.

I unrolled it, lifted up the chairs, and pushed the piano along, and got the new bright Turkey carpet on the floor.

"How lovely!" exclaimed Mrs. Editor.

"Beautiful!" I murmured, wiping my heated brow.

"See how well it goes with the walls and the furniture," continued Mrs. Editor.

We gazed in awe.

"It's the very thing," Mrs. Editor declared enthusiastically. "Why, what's the matter? You don't look well. Have you strained yourself lifting the piano?"

"Oh, it's nothing. I think I'll get out the car and go for a little run."

"And take the baby," added Mrs. Editor. "Where's Peter?"

Peter was brought, and at once noticed the new carpet. "Oh, er," he exclaimed. "Jaberxqseevu syxpsquex dooseex."

"Peter's looking a little pale, too," noticed Mrs. Editor.

"He'll be better after his ride," I assured her.

But he wasn't. He seemed to grow paler and paler. In fact, I made sure he was going to be sick, so I turned the car and we hurried back home.

Next morning he seemed quite all right again. "Motoring," explained Mrs. Editor.

Feeling Seedy

That day Mrs. Editor invited one of Peter's aunts to come and view the carpet. She came, and admired it very much. But as she felt rather seedy—the spring weather—she did not stay long.

That night Mrs. Editor went to bed early as she had a headache. However, before she retired she told me how pleased she was with the new carpet. I felt very relieved at that. Carpet hunting is exhausting work, and I was feeling a little bit queer myself.

The following day I hurried to the Den, where more trouble awaited me. The Art Manager complained that the new offices that had been built for him, with the extra thick girders, were too noisy, and he and his staff were going on strike.

Covers Man, too, complained that although everybody else's Dens had been shifted his remained where it was, so he absolutely refused to do any more covers.

Dear me! What troubles a poor editor has! What should I do?

I thought and thought, and at last a bright idea struck me. Why not take them both home and show them the new carpet?

Accordingly I rang up Mrs. Editor and asked her to buy two extra bath buns, and a cake with plums in it. Then I invited Covers Man and the Art Manager to tea.

They didn't want to come, but after a while consented, and on the way home I explained about the lovely carpet I was buying for the new house.

A Shock

I hurried them up the hill, into the house, and straight into the lounge.

"Oh!" said the Art Manager.

"Help! Help!" shouted Covers Man.

I looked at them in astonishment. The Art Manager's face had gone as pale as a soft-boiled potato, and Covers Man's had gone as red as a hard-boiled beetroot.

"The carpet!" both of them gasped.

"What's the matter with the carpet?" I inquired sternly.

"Why, look, it's——" and Covers Man put his hand over his eyes and groaned.

The Art Manager fainted.

When we had removed him to another room, Mrs. Editor explained that the ex-Youngest Reader had felt queer all day, and was resting in the garden. Peter, too, seemed far from well, and the maid complained of pains in the head.

"Have they been in the lounge?" I asked suspiciously.

"Why, yes," responded Mrs. Editor.

"Then it's the carpet!" I declared.

"Nonsense!" retorted Mrs. Editor "How can it be the carpet?"

"I don't know how, but the carpet's bewitched, or else it is the terra cotta and the yellow ochre and the sage green and the bronze blue that's been too much for them. That carpet is *too* good for folks like us."

The Art Manager showed signs of reviving, and Covers Man consented to take a cup of tea.

I regarded the pair with sternness.

"I propose," I said, "letting you two rest quietly in the lounge for an hour or so."

"Don't, please don't," they both pleaded.

"Well, what about the strike?" I inquired grimly.

"It's off," said Covers Man.

"We give in," shouted the Art Manager.

All is at peace at the Den now—but we have sent the carpet back. It's a lovely bit of goods, I admit, but I feel we ought not to keep it. What do my readers think?

The Editor

The Midnight Dance

By

Ethel Talbot

THIS happened during the term when Meg and Gerry and I shared a dorm. We never have done so since. We never did before. Still, even if we are ever put together again I rather think we've learned wisdom now. We learned it from the kids, too. From the very kiddiest kids of all. There, I've eaten a slabby slice of humble-pie in telling you that much. I'll have eaten more before I've told the whole long tale.

To begin all over again, then. It happened—the dance did—during the term when Meg and Gerry and I shared Dorm. Three.

The Dorm. of Daring Deeds was the name we christened it with. We'd got a sort of craze for christening dorms. just about then, and we thought that ours should make its mark.

"A dare every night
Will give a term of delight,"

quoth Gerry.

"To us, mayhaps," quoth I; "but hardly to the prefects."

"The extra-special fun will be in carrying the dares so that the prefects never twig," remarked Meg the brainy. "Rags are all right; but a rag that's for all the world and his wife to see and remark upon is any kid's rag. Let's have a spice of mystery in ours!"

We agreed.

It really was a scream. It was a joke. We bought a penny note-book between us and entered our rags—our nightly rags—with marks at their side. The Rag-Book, we called it.

No one ever knew of the night we spent in the garden hammocks—we gave ourselves Max for that.

Miss Terry came into the room and inquired whether something wasn't burning during the night when we acted the whole of *Macbeth* between ten and two o'clock a.m. So we only gave ourselves half marks for that, though she certainly never guessed that the smell she smelt was the burning of corks to make the King of Scotland's beard.

We lost every mark—cancelled out the whole of the rag, I mean—on the night that the kids next door came racing to us for aid, and thought they'd heard spooks. It was only us, of course, trying to fix up a wireless for ourselves and coming to grief on the roof outside our window, where we'd hoped to sling an aerial to the chimney-stack. We never did it, however, though it would have been the best rag of all if we could have engineered it, of course, and might have had wondrous results. Still, it wasn't any fun if the kids were going to rouse the school over it. So we cancelled it, and cancelled all marks, as I said before, and condemned ourselves to one rag-less night as penalty. As to the kids, we fairly lectured them till our jaws were stiff.

"We've heard—such strange sounds this term," wept they.

No doubt they had. But we didn't want to listen to their reminiscences. "Go back to bed," said we. "And go to sleep, you small cowards."

There are five of them. They sleep in Dorm. Two. Quite decent kids, and we're rather fond of them; but certainly, as all of us agreed, it wouldn't do for them to start patrolling the passages by night. "Funking is the most rotten state to get into," said we. "We wonder that you allow yourselves to funk. Back to bed!"

They went.

We went back to ours, and lay there, feeling annoyed as to the result of our last endeavour.

"A night off to-morrow," said Meg.

"All the better for thinking out fresh rags in," said Gerry.

She was right, no doubt; for it was on that particular night that I thought out the idea of the Midnight Dance.

In books and in real schools, too, of course, there's never been a dorm. that didn't go in for dormitory feasts. Dormitory serial stories, too, are well known; also girls dressed up as spooks (only those are chiefly in books and rather stuffy).

School plays have been acted sub rosa, though, in various dorms. at our school, and we've paraded the passages and slept in the garden; but—not one of us had thought before of inviting ourselves to a Midnight Dance.

"Why not?" said I when I suggested it.

"Well, it can't go down in the Rag-Book, anyway!" objected Meg, "for the sound of our hoofs gallivanting would certainly wake the girls who sleep below, and we'll lose all marks."

"Speak for yourselves," said I. "I'm not a Dutch doll with wooden legs, anyway. If I wanted to, I bet I could dance a fox-trot without waking one of them. But, that's not what I mean. I mean to have one in the drill-hall below."

"What?" stared they all.

It was a treat to see the hardened raggers really moved to enthusiasm. But, though my own, it was a nobby notion, quite.

"Pooh! Dancing is no good without music," said Gerry. "Of course I don't funk going to the drill-room and larking round a bit if you think it's worth while. But——"

"First item: Swannee," said I. "I can play that fine. Meg, you'll have to practise something up for the second item. As for when *your* turn comes, Gerry, it'll have to be the Keel Row or Sir Roger, you're so jolly bad at music."

"You don't mean——" twigged they. "Well, that would be worth while. But we'll be found out as sure as nuts."

"Meg was at the piano, while Gerry and I were fairly buzzing round"

Drawn by E. P. Kinsella

We wouldn't be. Not if we took pains, as I told them. "I bet it will be the finest rag of all, and we'll get Max for it, if we're careful, so let's try."

We did.

It took a bit of thinking out, however, for the Drill Hall door is always locked at night. However, Gerry got hold of the key, somehow, and unlocked it again; and we knew that entry would be easy. The Drill Hall, you see, is across a yard from the school buildings. We should have to race over the quad. before we reached it. Nobody would be likely to see us, of course, for the wing in which we and the babies sleep is the only wing that looks that way. By the same token the sound of the piano playing wouldn't be very likely to be heard, though it might.

We decided that it was a rag worth trying, any old way. I played Swannee in my practice hour to make sure I knew it, while I heard Gerry simply thundering out the Fox Trot Ball for all she was worth just after tea.

The hour drew nigh

We'd decided upon eleven o'clock as the hour, because by then all the mistresses are tucked away in their own quarters, and we shouldn't be likely to meet anyone at all. The witching hour drew near, and as it did so our spirits rose.

"Rather a lark—what?" said Gerry as we donned alfresco ball frocks by the aid of an electric torch; "to leave signs of the carouse, eh? And let the tongues of the school wag for nine days."

"On with the dance—first," said Meg and me.

Downstairs we went.

We took great care, too, to make no noise. For though the babies had said that they had heard so many sounds that term, yet we wanted to make masterpieces of our rags, as I've told you. Ragging had become very nearly a fine art with us, so we told ourselves. Looking back upon it now I think it very nearly had. We reached the Drill Hall in safety.

I don't suppose you've ever experienced

the thrilly feeling of finding yourself alone in a drill-hall at close on midnight, rule-breaking on a perfectly priceless dancing floor! Our drill-hall may be called the Drill Hall, but it's only used for dancing practice; all the drill classes take place in the gym. As soon as we had entered the door I made a swoop for the lights, and was just about to turn them on when Meg made a swoop for me

"Half a jiff," panted she.

In the half-jiff she had narrated to Gerry and myself that she had heard the most ominous creak in passing Miss Dacress's door. "I always thought the Head spent her nights in the other wing," said Meg; "yet you never know. And IF she saw us——"

"Saw your granny," said I. But for all that I didn't turn on the electrics. I groped to the piano and lighted its candles. Then, by their dim light, I rendered "Swannee" with appropriate feeling, while the others danced around.

It was thrilly; it was uncanny almost; it was really scrum. When Meg took my seat and hammered out the "Fox Trot Ball" I felt as though I had turned into a fizzy bottle of champagne, and that a waiter had just drawn my cork. Even to the tune of the Keel Row, very badly rendered by Gerry, I felt able to dance with perfect ease. We were all three enjoying ourselves prime, Meg at the piano again making jazz sounds and playing the latest, while Gerry and I were fairly buzzing round, when—CRASH! Meg suddenly stopped.

We stopped, too, with amazement.

"What on earth——" called we; then we ceased, for the look in Meg's eyes amazed us.

"Seen a spook?" said we.

She hadn't. But she told us, without delay, what she *had* seen. Whom, I mean. "All the kids. Every single one. I saw them. They opened the door and peeped in," said Meg. "And NOW, what are we to do?"

"The kids out of Dorm. Two?" inquired we agape.

"The same. Who else? They must have heard us, and come along. They must have recognized us, too. Though how on earth they dared——"

"Those little cowards!" said Gerry. "Why, last week we were giving them lectures on how not to funk!"

"Perhaps they've profited by them," said I.

We didn't dance any more. For one thing, our rag had fairly well failed. We couldn't consider it an artistic triumph worthy of Max, since the babies had twigged what we were at.

"Bedwards-ho with a Rumble-oh, I suppose," said Meg rather dispiritedly leaving the piano.

"Babewards-ho for ME!" said I. "I want to find out exactly how much the kids DID twig. Probably it was an optical delusion on your part, Meg. They may be as fast asleep as dormice."

"They came along the passage, hand in hand" *Drawn by E. P. Kinsella*

Dormwards went we.

Very, very silently; we had learned how to do the silent spectre stunt during half a term of ragging. It wouldn't have been necessary, perhaps, to be quite so silent if we'd known what was going on. Someone else was making enough noise to drown our fairy footsteps as we passed the Head's door.

The voice of the Head herself, at its most impressive. At the sound of her voice, when it's pitched on that identical and most awful note, Sixth Forms tremble and prefects quail.

To whom was she speaking? We trembled as we passed. Evidently to someone called up for a fearful and terrible midnight row.

As we tiptoed by we caught her words:

"I ask again—what was the reason?"

There was no reply.

We fluttered on. Even had we forgotten the existence of the babes, when suddenly we passed their door. It was open.

Also their beds. On peering in we found their sheets thrown back. We found their dorm. empty. We then found ourselves staring at each other through the early dawning with a most awful truth clutching at our hearts.

"It was THEM!" said Meg ungrammatically.

It was at that instant that the babes returned. There are five of them, as I said before, and they were all weeping. They came along the passage, hand in hand, like a picture of infants in a story-book, and the fact that they were all wearing pyjamas didn't, of course, make them look any the less tragic.

"Oh!" they all said when they saw us. "We didn't tell! Oh, no, we didn't! We followed you because we thought you were spooks, when we saw the light in the drill-hall. And we looked in, and then we knew. We were—trying to be brave, because you said we were—funks!" sobbed they.

"Was it YOU that Miss Dacres was speaking to?" we asked.

"Yes. And—we're to 'know our punishment' to-morrow, because—we wouldn't tell why we were out in the passage. You see—we knew it was you."

And then the babes all sobbed.

I don't know if any of you have kid-sisters at home. I've got two. At that very instant I got a most awful twinge somewhere inside of me at the horrible thought of what these kids had been through. A lecture from Miss Dacres at midnight would be bad enough; but—to stand up and refuse to answer her questions! Meg and Gerry and me simply flung ourselves on those kids.

"Into bed you get, and don't cry another drop," said we. "It'll be all right to-morrow, for we're going straight down. And, if anyone ever again calls you funks, send them to US!" Then we went round the beds and literally kissed their poor, brave, tear-stained faces. And downstairs we went.

I needn't enter into our row and punishment. I will only say that it very much met the case; we're squirming under it still. So that ends the tale, for we gave up writing the Rag-Book after that night; we simply, somehow, didn't want to keep on with it, and I'll tell you why. If ever you want to be utterly sickened and fed-up with breaking rules, and all that rotten sort of thing—just try the feeling of being shielded by brave babes!

A Letter to a Noisy Goblin

By Marion St. John Webb

Dear Sir,
I'm going to put this letter
Down the hole beside the tree;
Because it's your front door, I think—
At least, it ought to be.
You haven't got a knocker,
And I do not know your name,
But still, I hope you'll get this
Letter from me, all the same.
I want to ask you—must you
Ev'ry night make such a noise?
It sounds as if you're twenty
Noisy, squeaky little boys!
I hear you through my window
As I try to go to sleep;
You're playing with the catkins,
And pretending they are sheep.
You think they look like lamb's-tails—
And I think I must agree,
Although we call them "pussy-willows"
On a willow tree.
But, they are sheep, you're playing,
And you play there is a stile
You want them to go over,
And you're calling all the while:
"Over the stile!
Over the stile!
Over the stile!"
And since the catkins cannot move—
They're growing on a tree—
You climb the tree and shake them hard
(I'm watching—I can see).
And when, at last, you shake some off,
They fall down on the ground,
And you begin to shriek and laugh
And dance around and round.
I'm sure you're heard for quite a mile:
"Over the stile!
Over the stile!"
It makes me turn and toss about,
And keeps me wide awake;
I wish you'd play a quieter game—
Please do, for goodness' sake!
I'm tired of hearing all the while:
"Over the stile!"
So I'm going out this evening
To the hole beside the tree,
And hoping it's your front door—then
You'll get this note from me!

Little Folks Nature Club

Conducted by "Squirrel"

Photo: M. H. Crawford

The Yellow Toadflax is easily recognized by its touch of bright orange

THIS month I want you to come for a ramble with me in search of wild flowers. That does not sound a very exciting thing to suggest, because in June there are wild flowers everywhere and there is no need to search for them. But that is just where the little difficulty comes in which makes any kind of hunting exciting. There are so many flowers in June that it is something to know which are the real June ones. For many of them began to bloom in May, and some in April or even earlier.

Then it is something also to know what flowers need not be looked for, either because their season has passed or because it has not yet arrived. For example, it would be waste of time to go out in June specially to look for the lesser celandine, the wood anemone, the wild hyacinth (bluebell), the sweet violet, or the primrose, for these flowers have had their day and are waiting now for the coming of next spring.

Just what to Look For

But for that very reason it would be interesting and exciting if we were to come upon one of them in June, and we *might* by chance.

Again, it would not be worth while to go out in June specially to look for the harebell or the nettle-leaved bellflower, or purple loosestrife, or corn sow-thistle, or rose-bay willow-herb, or St. John's wort or many others, because they are not expected before July at the earliest. But if by chance you should find one of these flowers in June it would be worth noting in your diary as an important event.

Of course, a great deal depends on the part of the country and the kind of country in which you live. If your home is in the south-west of England you will probably find that all flowers are a week or two earlier there than they would be if it were on the east coast or in the Midlands, and if it should be on a high hill they will all be a week or two later than if it were on a flat, sheltered plain. So your diary, if you keep it properly, should be a very important book of reference for you, because when you have written it regularly for two or three years it should tell you just when you may expect every species of wild flower in your district.

Full of Interesting Plant Life

Now, when we start for our ramble the first thing we must do is to make our way to a country lane, because that will lead us somewhere, and also because the banks and hedgerows on each side of it will be full of interesting plant life. And one of the first things we shall notice there will be what I told you last June, namely, that June is the month of roses. In the hedgerows there will be splendid displays of dog-rose and field-rose, and on the banks hosts of little yellow roses of various kinds. As I told you about the wonderful rose

family last year I must not stop to talk about them now, but I don't want you to pass them by without noticing them.

As you walk you should look at every flower and decide to which family and species it belongs, pausing to make sure whenever necessary. For at first it is easy to mistake those common yellow roses, the wood avens and the cinquefoil, for buttercups and vice versa. As your eye becomes more familiar with them it will distinguish the roses and the buttercups, that is, the family likenesses, more and more quickly, but it is never so simple to pick out at a glance the special features that tell you the species of a flower.

The Lesser Spearwort

For example, there are many different kinds of buttercup, all of them very much alike. I told you last month about the three commonest ones. They are all May flowers, but this month in ditches and other damp places you will probably find the lesser spearwort, which belongs to the buttercup family. You cannot help seeing the likeness of the flowers to those of the common species of buttercup, though they are much smaller, but the leaves at first sight are puzzling. Instead of being large and broad and feathery like those of most of the family, they are long and narrow like blades of grass, and from this the plant takes its name. There is also a greater spearwort which grows in similar places, but it is not nearly so common. It is much taller than the other, has thick, hollow stems, and flowers that are about an inch across, that is, twice as large as those of the lesser spearwort.

Photo: M. H. Crawford

The flowers of the Tufted Vetch are like small bright blue sweet peas

A Beautiful Crimson Flower

Here are two very different June flowers of the roadside, the hedge woundwort and the betony. These are members of the deadnettle family, that is, their flowers are lipped. Both have beautiful dark crimson blossoms arranged in circles round the tops of their stems, but they are easily distinguished by their general appearance, and especially by their leaves. The hedge woundwort has large heart-shaped leaves which are covered on both sides with very fine silky hairs which give them a soft, velvety feeling. As the name of the plant tells us, these leaves were formerly used for applying to wounds in order to stop bleeding.

The betony is a more wiry plant. Its leaves are much narrower and they are thick, smooth and leathery instead of being hairy and soft. The lower ones have stalks as long as themselves. You will notice that the leaves of both plants are toothed like those of the nettle.

The lipped blossoms of both plants are visited by bees for their honey. You will notice that the dust-making and the seed-making flowers are hidden under the upper lip which forms a little hood and so protects them from rain. They are placed there so that when a bee is sucking honey its back will brush against them and so will carry dust from one blossom to another and help in the formation of good seed.

The Red Bartsia

Here is another little plant with red blossoms which look as if they must belong to the same family as woundwort and betony, because they are also

lipped. But you will notice that they are not arranged in circles round the top of the stem, but are placed one above another and all on one side of the stalk. This plant is called red bartsia. It is not so common as the other two, but if you look for it in June you are almost sure to find it in most parts of England. It is a cousin of another very common plant called yellow rattle, and, like it, is a parasite, living upon the roots of other plants. It is a most disappointing species to the collector, because when you have taken the trouble to carry it home and dry and press it with the greatest possible care, its blossoms will always become black.

A Kind of Wild Potato

Close by are some very attractive bluish-purple flowers with bright yellow centres. Look carefully at their form and you will not be surprised when I tell you that they are a kind of wild potato. At any rate, the plant, which is called bittersweet, belongs to the potato family, but if you were to dig it up you would not find tubers at its roots. You will notice that the lower leaves are heart shaped, but the upper ones are like the head of a spear with two little leaflets at the base representing the crossbar of the spear. Some bittersweet plants grow by themselves, and when they do their stems are strong and stand upright, but others strike their roots down well under the hedge and climb by leaning on the hedge twigs. If you examine specimens of this latter kind you will find that their stalks are long and weak and unable to support themselves.

Not many yards away are two more skilful climbers, the tufted vetch and the hairy vetch, both of them June flowers. They both climb by means of tendrils at the tips of their leaves, which they twist round twigs and so secure support. The tufted vetch has a great many flowers in each bunch. They are like small, bright blue sweet peas, but there may be a dozen or even twice that number together, and all placed on one side of the stalk. The hairy vetch is similar, but its flowers are smaller and there are fewer of them and its hairy pod contains only two seeds, whereas that of the tufted vetch has many. The slender tare is a much smaller plant of the same family with pale blue flowers and pods that contain four seeds.

Photo: M. H. Crawford

The Hedge Woundwort is recognized by its dark crimson blossoms and its heart-shaped leaves

Into the Woods

We could spend the whole day among the flowers of the roadside, but I wish you to come also into the fields and woods. Before we step over the stile you must look at this yellow toadflax. Note how firmly it keeps its mouth shut, and yet how boldly the lips are marked with bright orange. This is to attract the bumble bees, which are the only insects heavy enough to open the mouth and so reach the honey, and therefore the only ones that can carry the magic dust from one blossom to another.

The meadow is gay with ox-eye daisies. A number of other members of the daisy family are also June flowers, but if we stopped to look at them all we should never get on. In one part of the meadow, however, there is a little patch of meadow crane's-bill, which is a wild geranium with large bluish-purple flowers. Each blossom has ten stamens, and you will notice that in some five of them are standing upright against the long seed-making flower in the middle, and five are resting on the petals.

To-morrow the first five will wither and the others will rise to take their places, and on the third day they will wither also, and then, and not till then, the seed-making flower will ripen and be ready to receive the magic dust from another blossom.

Among the Corn

In the cornfield there is a glorious array of red poppies. They seem all to be common field poppies, which you may know by the round, smooth seed-case below the petals. In some fields you may find the long-headed poppy, which has a long, narrow seed-case. This plant is more common in Scotland than in England. In sandy and chalky districts you may be lucky enough to find the rough-headed poppy, the rarest of our four red species. It has a round seed-case, thickly covered with coarse hairs. The fourth species is the pale poppy, which is much lighter in colour than the others and has a long seed-case, sparsely covered with coarse hairs.

Two Different Families

Those spots of bright blue among the corn are cornflowers, and those others, of gold, are corn-marigolds. The cornflower belongs to the knapweed branch of the daisy family, and the corn-marigold is a true daisy. So it is interesting to compare them with each other and with the ox-eye daisy we saw in the meadow. The ox-eye daisy has an outer ring of white ribbons each with its tip split into three points. The outer ring of the corn-marigold is yellow, and each petal has also three points, but they are more rounded than those of the ox-eye daisy, and the middle one is shorter than the others. On the cornflower the outer ring consists of blue tubes, each with five points on its rim. Once upon a time the ribbons of the daisies were also five-pointed tubes, but in course of ages they have been split and flattened out and in this process they have lost two of their points.

We must finish our ramble with the woods. They seem to be full of foxgloves, but down in the damp part near the stream there is another very different plant which I wish you to notice. It has little brown globular flowers with the tops projecting forward like the roof of a motor van. It is called the figwort.

Specially to Attract Bumble-Bees

Now the foxglove is specially formed to attract bumble-bees, and you will notice that its lowest blossoms are open first. This is because bees have a habit of beginning at the lowest flower on a plant and then gradually rising to the higher ones. The figwort has an unpleasant odour which attracts flies and wasps. Wasps act in the opposite way to bees, visiting the highest blossoms first, and then descending gradually to the others, so the upper flowers of the figwort are the earliest to open.

Find the Others for Yourself

There are many other equally interesting flowers everywhere in June, and I have no doubt you will be able to find out some of their secrets when you ramble by yourselves.

Little Folks Nature Club

To join the Club, send a penny stamp, with your name, address and age to "Squirrel," Little Folks Office, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.4.

Winning her Colours

By CHRISTINE CHAUNDLER

CHAPTER IV

In Sheila's Study

STEPPING from one window-sill to another was really quite a dangerous proceeding, in spite of the light-hearted way in which Pip had spoken about it. Anybody less agile and sure-footed than was Pip could never have managed it. As it was, even for Pip there came one dreadful moment when, with one foot on Sheila's sill and the other on her own, she was not quite certain herself if the feat could be accomplished. Her arms, she discovered, were just not long enough for her fingers to grasp the framework of Sheila's window unless she first relinquished her grip upon the framework of her own. It meant that she must stand for an instant, with her feet stretched far apart, depending solely upon this insecure foothold, while she leant sideways to reach a new hand grip.

But Pip was never a person to be lightly turned from her purpose, and anyway it would be almost as dangerous now to turn back as it would be to go forward. Leaning all her weight against the wall, the little girl boldly let go her hold with one hand, and slid the other along the brickwork until her fingers touched the frame of Sheila's window. Once she had got a firm grip upon that she was all right. In another moment, both her feet were on Sheila's sill, and in yet another she was standing safely beside her two friends in the prefect's cubicle.

"Oh, Pip! You oughtn't to have done that! You might have been killed!" said Aileen, grasping her chum's arm and drawing a deep breath of relief. "It was perfectly awful to stand here watching you. I thought you weren't going to be able to reach."

"As a matter of fact, it was rather farther than I thought," said Pip airily. "Still, I managed it all right—and here I am. Now to business. You go first, Susie, and if you see anybody, stop and cough, or blow your nose loudly or sneeze or something. Aileen, you go a little away behind her—about a dozen yards behind, say—and if Susie stops and coughs, you stop and cough, too. I'll come behind you, and if I hear you coughing, I shall know there's danger about and shall slip into some dark corner and hide till it's gone by."

"All right," said Susie. "How far do you want us to scout for you? Right to the door of Sheila's study?"

"No, not so far as that. If we did happen to meet anybody, it might be dangerous for you afterwards if you'd been seen there. Go along till you get to the top of the classroom corridor, then, if the coast is clear as far as you can see, whistle or something, and I'll catch you up and risk going the rest of the way alone.

Once you've left me, you two had better skip back to the sit. and mingle with the rest of the crew, and if you do happen to see a prefect or monitress, you might fake up some excuse to speak to them. It would be just as well to let as many people as possible see you so that you'll have lots of witnesses afterwards to prove that it couldn't possibly have been either of you."

"We'll let plenty of people see us," Susie assured her, and then she led the way down the darkened dormitory and out into the bright light of the corridor.

All went well. They encountered nobody at all, and at the top of the classroom corridor—as the passage that ran past the classrooms was called—Susie and Aileen paused, and, after a cautious look around, Susie gave a low whistle.

"Not a soul in sight anywhere," she whispered as Pip crept up.

"Good!" Pip whispered back. "Then you two cut off back to the sitting-room. Thanks for seeing me safely here. And mind, you don't know a thing about it—either of you—when the pre's start making inquiries."

"You bet we won't if we can help it," chuckled Susie. "I only hope they'll ask their questions so that we shall be able to answer them innocently."

"Oh, I expect you'll be able to do that," Pip said reassuringly. "One can generally get round any awkward question without fibbing as long as one doesn't lose one's head. Now you be off while I get a move on."

"Shall I go up to the dorm. presently so as to help you get back to your cubicle?" asked Aileen. But Pip shook her head at the suggestion.

"No, better not. I don't know how long I shall be for one thing, and for another it will be best for you not to run too many risks. You'll be safer if you stay in the sit. Then everybody will see that you've not been out of the room long enough to have done it yourselves. Ta-ta! I'll tell you all about it in the morning."

"You will be careful when you get back through the window, won't you?" pleaded Aileen.

"Of course I shall be. I shall get back quite safely—you needn't worry your head about that." And with a good-bye nod to her two friends, Pip ran lightly down the corridor to carry out her scheme of vengeance—which was nothing more or less than to "rag" Sheila Morris's study during the latter's absence at the orchestra meeting.

The prefects' studies were just beyond the classroom corridor. The passage outside them was quite deserted when Pip reached it. The Fourth Former tiptoed quietly along, making no sound at all in her stockinged feet, until she reached the door of Sheila's study.

Once there, Pip hesitated for a moment or two, debating within herself whether she should or should not carry out her naughty plan. It was rather a dreadful thing that she was contemplating doing—ragging a prefect's study. She did not know if such a thing had ever been done before at St. Cecilia's. Certainly it hadn't during the time that she herself had been there. For a moment even Pip's intrepid heart failed her at the enormity of the crime she was intending to commit. Then the memory of the indignities she had endured that evening—"All Sheila Morris's fault!" Pip told herself angrily—overcame her half-repentant mood. She gave a quick glance up and down the corridor to make sure that she was not observed—then softly opened the study door and slipped inside.

The room was in darkness, but Pip, having first shut the door as noiselessly as she had opened it, felt for the switch and turned on the electric light. The blinds were already drawn, and, after a moment's contemplation, Pip set to work.

The prefects' studies at St. Cecilia's, except for the laying of the fires in the winter-time and for a thorough turn-out once a week by a maid, were kept clean by the owners themselves or the small girls who fagged for them. A dustpan and brush, and the necessary cleaning things, were supplied by the school authorities, and kept, when not in use, at the bottom of the roomy cupboard which each study possessed. The furniture, which was of the simplest description, was also supplied by the school. But the owners of the studies were at liberty to supplement it if they chose with rugs and cushions, easy chairs and bookcases and other amenities of civilization. Sheila Morris's study was an exceptionally prettily arranged one, and Pip saw at a glance that there was plenty of mischief to be done in it by willing hands.

"What shall I begin with?" Pip asked herself. "Books!" she added quickly, as her eyes fell upon a neatly stacked three-

tier bookcase standing against the wall. Falling upon it with energy, Pip took out armful after armful of volumes, depositing them all anyhow upon the floor. The bookcase emptied, she fell upon Sheila's desk, sweeping pens and papers ruthlessly on to the ground. Then the naughty junior unhooked pictures and photographs from the walls, cleared the mantelpiece of ornaments, and added them all to the confused heap upon the carpet in the middle of the study floor.

The room by this time looked fairly deplorable, but Pip was not yet satisfied. She looked about to see what else she could do, and caught sight of a crumpled newspaper lying in a corner. With a chuckle of glee she pounced upon it.

"I can make a tophole mess with this!" she said. And she began to tear it into little bits and scattered them about the study.

The newspaper certainly added considerably to the confusion, and Pip hunted about to see if she could not find some others with which to increase the mess. As she searched for them a fresh idea came to her, and picking up a big, downy cushion from Sheila's arm-chair, she felt it critically.

"Feathers!" she announced triumphantly. "If I rip up a seam and let them all out, it will give just the finishing touch to the picture! Now where does Sheila keep her scissors? Surely she's got some somewhere? Well, anyhow, she'll have a knife in her cupboard. I wonder if I can get the door open to have a look?"

Opening the cupboard door was a matter of some difficulty, since a pile of books was in the way. But Pip got it open at length and hunted round amongst Sheila's small store of household goods for a pair of scissors or a knife. As it happened, there was neither there, the prefect's fag having taken the knives away to clean them, and Sheila herself having carried the scissors upstairs to the dormitory. It seemed as though Sheila's feather cushion would escape destruction this time.

But Pip was a person of resource and she had set her heart upon emptying the contents of that cushion upon the floor. Finding no other implement available, she set her teeth to the task. They were strong, sharp little teeth and they proved quite equal to it. In a few minutes more the little room was full of floating feathers, and Pip, feeling that now, at last, she had really made an artistic job of it, stood and regarded her handiwork in triumphant satisfaction.

"There, Sheila Morris! When you come in and find that to-morrow morning, I guess you'll feel pretty nearly as bad as I did when I was standing in the pillory!" she said. Then, having fished the dustpan and broom out of the cupboard and placed them so that Sheila would tumble over them when she next came in, Pip turned off the light, opened the door and peeped cautiously out into the corridor. There was nobody about, and, closing the door softly behind her, the naughty junior sped silently back to bed.

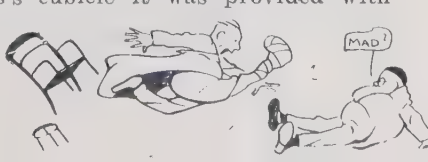
The dormitory was still in darkness when she reached it, and Pip laughed softly to herself as she groped her way along to Sheila's cubicle.

"I've not met anybody the whole way. It's been as easy as easy," she thought. "Now all I've got to do is to climb back through the window and get into bed, and nobody in the world, except Susie and Aileen, will ever know that I've been out of it."

When she and her two friends had left the cubicle, Pip had pushed Sheila's window, which was a sash window, down at the bottom, in order to leave it just as it had been before Susie and Aileen had first opened it. She had to open it again now so that she might climb out, but once she was upon the outside sill, she shut the bottom sash down once more, leaving only the top of the window open.

"I think that's about how it was," she thought, as she stood there. And, placing her arm over the top sash to support herself, she stood for a moment or two to take her bearings.

There was no electric torch this time to light her, and it was fully a minute before Pip's eyes grew sufficiently accustomed to the darkness for her to see where it was she had to put her foot. As she was outside the window, sounds from within the dormitory were not very audible to her, and, her attention being otherwise engaged, the faint sound of the opening and shutting of a door passed unnoticed by her. It was not until the cubicle behind was suddenly flooded with light—being a monitress's cubicle it was provided with



a separate switch—that she became aware that anybody beside herself was in the dormitory.

Pip gave a startled exclamation and turned quickly to see who was there. Her exclamation was echoed by somebody from inside the window—somebody who, after the first moment of horrified astonishment, sprang across the cubicle and gripped the child outside the window firmly by shoulder and arm. And fortunate it was for Pip that she was so gripped! If she had not been, she would certainly have tumbled off the window-sill in her dismay and fallen on to the stones of the quadrangle some forty feet below.

For the somebody who had acted with fortunate promptitude was—Sheila Morris!

CHAPTER V

Pip's Word of Honour

PIP made a movement to try and free herself from Sheila's grasp, but Sheila only clutched her the tighter.

"No, you don't!" the prefect said firmly. "You'll just come along inside. Come on! Come on in at once!"

"I can't! Not when you're holding me like that," said Pip with an impatient wriggle. "If you'll leave go, I'll come inside. But I can't unless you do."

Sheila loosened her grip a little, but she still retained a firm hold of Pip's arm with her one hand, while with the other she cautiously raised the bottom sash of the window until she was able to grasp the little girl from below.

"Now stoop down and creep through," she said. "I think there's room for you to get through now." And, half of her own volition and half pulled by Sheila, Pip came

The prefect drew a deep breath of relief when at last the younger girl was safely landed in her cubicle. She had been horrified at the danger of Pip's position on the window-ledge, and she kept tight hold of the little girl's arm even now, as though she feared that Pip might try to escape again should she let her go.

"Now, perhaps, you'll explain what on earth you mean by this! What were you doing out there on my window-sill?" she demanded, pulling Pip round to face the light more directly. Then she added:

"Why have you got your clothes on? I thought you were supposed to be in bed?"

Pip did not answer. For once in her life the naughty junior was really scared. A vision of the awful mess she had left downstairs in Sheila's study floated before her mind's eye. She scarcely dared to think what the consequences would be if it was ever discovered that she was the author of that confusion. Five minutes—three minutes—ago Pip had been confident that nobody ever would discover it, but now the factor upon which her confidence was based had tumbled to the ground. Sheila had caught her red-handed, climbing through the window. Sheila knew that she had been able to escape from the locked cubicle. Sheila would not have very much difficulty in putting two and two together when she found out the state that her study was in.

Sheila gave her a little shake and repeated her question.

"What were you doing? Answer me at once! It was dreadfully dishonourable of you to get up when matron had trusted you to stay in bed."

"It wasn't dishonourable! That's just it—she didn't trust me. I offered her my parole and she wouldn't take it. The mean thing went and locked my door instead. I should never have *dreamt* of getting up if she'd taken my word of honour," Pip said virtuously.

"Oh, that's the explanation, is it! Your door is locked, and so, as you couldn't get out of the door, you tried to escape through the window. Now I begin to see daylight!" said Sheila. "Thank goodness I came in when I did! If I hadn't had such a bad headache that Miss Clifford sent me away from the orchestra meeting to go early to bed, you—you might have been killed! You couldn't have got in without opening the window at the bottom, and it would have been the easiest thing in the world for you to have slipped while you were trying to open it. Do you know that this window is quite forty feet from the ground? If you'd fallen you must have been dashed to pieces in the quad.!"

And the prefect gave a shudder of horror at the thought of the danger which the younger girl had escaped.

Pip herself, however, was not at all impressed by the risk she had run. If she had fallen, of course, she probably would have been killed. But then, she had never had the remotest intention of falling. If you fell down the flight of stairs that led

to central hall, no doubt you would be seriously injured—but people didn't make a fuss about the dangers you'd escaped every time you went downstairs! To Pip, who could climb better possibly than any other girl in the school, the journey from sill to sill seemed very little more dangerous than descending the centre stairs.

But though Pip paid scant attention in one sense to what Sheila was saying, in another she drank in every word, and a sudden hope sprang to life in her heart as the prefect spoke. If Sheila really believed that she was only *trying* to escape, that she had not, as yet, succeeded in getting in through the window—well, was there any need to enlighten her? If Sheila really believed that she was only just leaving her own cubicle when she was captured, it would make the alibi still more convincing. And the prefect had jumped to it of her own accord—nothing that Pip had said had led her astray. If Sheila's gleam of daylight was a false reflection it wasn't Pip's fault!

So Pip discreetly held her tongue, and refrained from making her senior *au fait* with the fact that she was on her return journey. Sheila was silent, too, for a few minutes. Then she said, gazing at her prisoner intently:

"Finding no other implement available, she set her teeth to the task" *Drawn by Elizabeth Earnshaw*

"I suppose you know this means a pretty serious row for you if it comes out?"

Pip shrugged her shoulders.

"S'pose it does," she agreed. "Who're you going to report me to first? Matron, or Miss Druce, or who?"

Sheila sat down on her bed and drew the younger girl to stand in front of her.

"I ought to take you to matron, and matron, I suppose, would take you straight to Miss Druce. That, I suppose, is what I really *ought* to do."

"Ought to do?" Pip looked at her inquiringly. "Don't you mean to do it, then?"

Sheila gazed at her again in that same intent way before she answered her.

"No," she said. "I don't think I do. It was awfully naughty of you and you deserve to be very severely punished. But if you'll give me your word of honour that you'll never, upon any consideration whatever, get through your cubicle window in that way again, I'll let you go back to bed and we'll say no more about it. But mind, Pip, if I let you off, you'll have to

promise faithfully that you won't do it, and you'll have to keep your promise."

"But I can't go back to bed unless I climb through the window again," objected Pip. "My cubicle door's locked."

"I forgot that," said Sheila. Then she let go of Pip's arm and rose to her feet.

"I expect matron has left the key in the lock, though," she said. And she opened the door of her own cubicle and went to look.

Matron had not left the key in the lock. Pip could have told her that with certainty, Susie and Aileen having made quite sure of that fact first of all. However, Pip deemed it wiser to leave the prefect to discover it for herself, as Sheila very soon did.

"You see!" Pip remarked. "If you're really going to be a brick and not tell anybody, you'll have to let me get back through the window just this once more."

"I shall not, then!" said Sheila with decision.

"Well, how can you manage not to tell, then?" asked Pip.

Sheila considered for a moment.

"I must get the key from matron," she said at length. "I think I can get her to give it to me without telling her just why I want it, and I'm sure she'll never guess as long as I don't tell. She would never imagine for a moment that you would be mad enough to attempt to escape by climbing from your window-sill to mine. But remember, Pip, if I do manage to get you back to bed again without getting you into a row, it's only on condition that you never try to do such a thing again. You must give me your solemn word of honour that you won't. Will you promise?"

"I'll promise," said Pip, readily enough. "It's not likely I'll ever *want* to do such a thing another time," she told herself.

"And you won't try to get away or anything while I'm gone, will you? You'll stay here in my cubicle till I come back?"

"Word of honour!" said Pip, and Sheila vanished on her rather difficult errand.

She was some time gone, and Pip began to wonder whether the rest of the dormitory would not be up to go to bed before she was back again. The bell for chapel had rung some time ago, and chapel and roll-call together did not take much more than half an hour as a rule, after which all the girls below the rank of Fifth or Sixth came up to bed. It would be awkward for Sheila if the Sixth Form girl's charges arrived in the dormitory before she returned with the key. Sixth Form girls were not supposed to connive at crimes of the kind which Pip had just committed. It was really rather decent of Sheila to take so much trouble on her behalf, Pip thought, as she waited for the prefect. It wouldn't be a particularly pleasant job, nor a particularly easy one, either, to wheedle that key out of matron without letting her know exactly why it was wanted. Matron was certain to ask a good many awkward questions, and she might even say snarky things. You never knew with matron. It would have been far easier for Sheila altogether if she had just handed the culprit over to justice and let the law take its course.

Pip's conscience began to prick her dreadfully. That muddled and feather-strewn room downstairs was a poor return for all Sheila's kindness now. The more Pip thought of it, the more she realized what a poor return it was. By the time the prefect came back with the key, the little girl was almost ready to confess.

"You've got it, then," she said, as Sheila stooped to fit the key into the lock. "Did you have much of a job? I suppose she asked you no end of questions? What did you say you wanted it for?"

"That's nothing to do with you," said Sheila briefly as she opened Pip's door. "Now then, there you are. Buck up in and get your clothes off and get back into bed."

"You might tell me," objected Pip as she entered her own domain and began to undress beneath Sheila's compelling eye.

"Perhaps I might. But I'm not going to," returned Sheila. "Be quick and get your clothes off. The others will all be up in about two ticks."

Pip obeyed her, feeling a little irritated again at the elder girl's tone. However, there was nothing to be gained by disobedience now. Sheila might yet repent of her determination to shield the culprit if Pip did or said anything to annoy her. And—well, it would really mean a terrible row! Pip was under no delusions about that. It would be better to keep on the right side of Sheila until the matter was finally and absolutely clinched.

So she concealed her annoyance at Sheila's superior tone, and hurried into her night-things. Sheila stayed watching her until she was safely under the bed-

clothes once more. Then the prefect fastened the door back in the way in which the cubicle doors were generally fastened during the night.

"Aren't you going to lock the door again?" asked Pip, curiosity getting the better of her resentment.

"No. It's to be left open now, and I'm to take the key back to matron. You're on your honour not to leave your cubicle again until the bell rings for breakfast to-morrow morning. I suppose you can be trusted to stay here?"

"Of course I can!" said Pip indignantly. "If matron had accepted my parole before I should never have tried to escape at all."

"Well, mind you keep your parole now. Good night."

"Good night," said Pip rather stiffly. Then a sudden rush of gratitude swept all the stiffness away.

"I say, thank you most awfully for not reporting me! It was jolly decent of you and I'm most frightfully obliged to you. And, I say, Sheila! I'm fearfully sorry, but——"

It would all have come out then in a rush of penitent remorse had not Sheila herself stopped the confession.

"There's no need to thank me," the prefect interrupted sharply. "If you want to know, I'm doing it more for the sake of the dormitory than for your sake. My dorm.'s always getting into disgrace, and it isn't pleasant for me to feel that mine is the worst dormitory in St. Cecilia's. So you needn't go flattering yourself that what I've done to-night has been done solely for you, for I assure you that it hasn't. Good night, and for goodness' sake do try and behave a little bit better for the future."

She went into her own cubicle as she finished speaking and shut the door, and Pip's remorse died a sudden death. All the small girl's angry feelings came flooding back. Not even the thought that she had saved her from a serious row could avail to calm Pip's angry resentment towards Sheila now.

"She's a *beast* to speak to me like that! And I'm *glad* I called her one through the doorway, even though it did mean being sent early to bed. I'm glad I ragged her study, and I'm glad I didn't confess. And I jolly well hope that when she sees the mess her things are in, she'll feel as fed-up as I'm feeling now!"

That—not penitence—was the burden of Pip's thoughts as she fell asleep that night.

CHAPTER VI

Promotion

PIP awoke with rather mingled feelings next morning when the getting-up bell summoned the inmates of the various dormitories at St. Cecilia's to arise and take their part once more in the daily round of life. The depression caused overnight by the numerous punishments which had fallen upon her had quite passed. Punishments never depressed Pip for long. She was always quite happy again once they were over. True, these particular punishments were not quite over yet. There was still detention for the afternoon, and the essay for Miss Druce upon the correct use of the word "beast" had still to be written. But Aileen and Susie had promised to think out some ideas for the essay, and though, of course, it was a beastly—no! rotten—subject, yet no doubt it would get written somehow. And, anyway, detention was an ordinary, everyday kind of punishment of which no self-respecting junior need be ashamed. There was nothing degrading or humiliating about it, as there was in having to stand out at a meal-time or in being sent early to bed.

But though she was quite happy again about the punishments, Pip couldn't feel quite at her ease over that ragged study. It really was rather an awful thing to have done. Viewed by daylight, it seemed even more awful than it had seemed last night, when Pip had had her resentment and anger to sustain her. That cushion wrecking, for instance; that really was rather exceeding the limits of a justifiable rag.

"All the rest can be put right again," Pip reflected as she brushed her hair. "But I don't believe anybody under the sun will be able to put that cushion together any more. I suppose it was really rather beast—rotten of me to have done it. I almost wish I'd left that cushion alone."

It was, however, much too late to go wishing that, and Pip had to go down to breakfast with her feelings divided between gleeful anticipation of Sheila's rage when she should discover the rag, trepidation of what might happen should

the authorship of the crime ever be brought home to her, and remorse that she had carried things quite so far as to spoil that feather cushion.

Miss Druce always liked to say good morning to her girls as they passed into the dining-hall to breakfast. The headmistress stood at the door of the hall and the school filed past her in orderly and silent procession, except for a murmured "Good morning, Miss Druce," from each girl as she went by. This ceremony took quite a little while to perform, and not until it was over and grace had been said, every girl standing in her proper place behind her chair waiting for it, was a word permitted to be spoken within the dining-hall. Aileen and Susie were already in their places when Pip entered the room, and they both looked at their friend eagerly as she took up her position between them. But they did not dare even to whisper to her then, and they were obliged to curb their curiosity until the Head had taken her departure and the mistress who was on duty in the hall had said grace.

But immediately grace had been said and the buzz of conversation had broken out, almost drowning the clatter of teacups and the clinking of porridge spoons, they both of them turned to Pip breathlessly.

"What happened last night? Did you do it, and did you manage to get back without being caught?" questioned Susie, while Aileen asked simultaneously:

"Was it awfully difficult getting through the window again? I kept thinking and thinking about you, wondering if you'd fall and be killed! I was so awfully glad when we went up to the dorm. last night and saw you safe in bed when we passed your cubicle. Only we were afraid you'd been caught by somebody as your door was open. What happened? Did somebody catch you ragging Sheila's study, or was it only that matron came back and unlocked the door?"

"Sh-sh!" said Pip apprehensively, throwing a nervous glance up and down the long table. But nobody seemed to be listening. Everybody was far too busy doing tongue exercise after the long silence of the night, and, seeing that Aileen's rather injudicious remarks had escaped notice, Pip ventured to give her friends a brief account of all that had happened after they had left her the previous evening, and of the episode in Sheila's cubicle.

"Phew! I say, what an escape! But, Pip, when she sees her study won't she twig it was you who ragged it?" asked Susie in a scared whisper.

"I don't think so," said Pip. "As a matter of fact, I'm not sure it won't rather help—her having nabbed me, I mean. She thought I was only *trying* to escape, you see. She didn't seem to dream that I was getting back again. She thinks that I should never have been able to get through the window if she hadn't happened to come in—thinks she saved my life by her prompt action, you know, and all that rot! I think it will make my ali-thing safer than ever, for now that she knows I was locked up she's not even likely to ask if it was me."

"It was decent of her to go and get the key from matron without reporting you," remarked Aileen.

"Um-m, yes, it was in a way. I thought it was decent myself at first, until she began to make beastly cutting remarks about how she wasn't doing it for me—only for the sake of the dorm., because she was fed-up with being the monitress of the worst dormitory in the school. She was so beastly about it in the end that it sort of quenched all my gratitude," Pip said.

Susie giggled.

"You said 'beastly' again," she informed her friend.

"I didn't, did I? Did I really? I say, I must stop myself from saying it somehow. Do be angels and give me a pinch every time you hear me saying it! It's such a beastly bother curing oneself of a habit like that when once——Owh! I say! You needn't both do it together!" Pip cried reproachfully, as Susie and Aileen applied rather unangelic reminders on her arms at one and the same moment.

"Pip Martin, if you make that noise again I shall send you out of the room," said the prefect in charge of the table.

"It wasn't Pip. It was us. We pinched her," Susie and Aileen interposed hastily.

"Then you will please *not* pinch her at meal-times," said the prefect. "If you don't behave yourselves I shall send you all three out of the room"—a threat which made the delinquents subside at once and finish their breakfast in the most decorous manner. None of them, Pip least of all, had any desire to get into more trouble yet awhile.

After breakfast came bed-making and

cubicle tidying under the supervision of the dormitory monitresses. Sheila accompanied her charges up to the dormitory to superintend the operations. Then, when every bed was made and every cubicle was tidy, the prefect went downstairs to spend half an hour in her study before the bell should ring to summon the school to lessons and prayers. This would be her first opportunity of visiting her study this morning, and Pip and her two friends, who were just behind her—they were the last to leave the dormitory, Pip having been sent back to put away a forgotten pair of slippers and Susie and Aileen having waited for her—watched her with nervous eagerness as she descended the stairs. The prefect, little dreaming of the chaos that awaited her, strolled leisurely onwards, and as at length she disappeared from the juniors' sight round the corner that led to the prefects' corridor, Aileen gave a scared little giggle.

"'I say! What do you think? Sheila Morris has had her study ragged!'" *Drawn by Elizabeth Earnshaw*

"Now she'll find out!" she said.

"I wonder what on earth she'll say when she opens the door?" speculated Susie.

"She'll probably screech!" chuckled Pip. "I put a dustpan so that she's almost bound to tumble over it."

"Don't you wish you were there to see, Pip?" Susie asked.

"U-m-m, I mightn't mind being a fly on the ceiling," Pip said with a grin. "But I don't think I'd care to be there any way else! Come on, let's get round to the sit. We don't want any of the prefects to see us hanging about here. They're such a beastly suspicious lot this term—— Oh, no, no! You needn't! I won't say it again! Honour bright, I won't!" This latter exclamation called forth by the fact that Susie and Aileen had both pounced upon her arms again.

"Now, children, don't stand about in the corridor. Go to your sitting-room, or to the gymnasium, or else go and put on your coats and go for a run in the quadrangle," said a mistress who came round a corner at the moment. Then, as she caught sight of Pip, Miss Parr, for it was St. Cecilia's games mistress, stopped with a satisfied exclamation.

"Oh, it's Philippa Martin! Just the very person I wanted to see. Philippa, you played a very good game of hockey yesterday; so good, in fact, that, although you are so young, I am going to try you for

the vacancy in the second eleven. No, don't get too excited about it!" as Pip's face lighted up with joy. "It is not yet a permanent appointment. I am going to *try* you for the next two or three weeks and see how you shape. I am a little afraid that you are too young and too small. I am not sure that you will have the staying power for match play. However, the second eleven is playing no outside matches the first half of this term. The first outside match is against Halton Hall early in December. By that time I shall have been able to see how you get on when you play with older girls. It is one thing to play well when you are with people of your own size and weight. Quite another when it comes to playing with girls from the Upper Fourth and Fifth!"

"Oh, Miss Parr!" breathed Pip, too overwhelmed with delight to say anything further. For though she had hoped for it, Pip had not really expected that she would be given a chance to qualify for the vacancy in the second team. It seemed almost too good to be true—a member of the junior school to play in the second eleven! Why, Pip believed that such a thing had never happened before at St. Cecilia's since hockey first began!

Miss Parr laughed at the blissful expression of her face.

"I can see that you are pleased! Well, it is rather an honour for a person of your age. Mind you play up well in the practices—otherwise you'll be turned out and someone else will be put in your place. By the way, there's a practice this afternoon. Be sure and turn up in good time for it."

"This afternoon! Oh, Miss Parr!" The pleasure faded from Pip's face and consternation took its place. "Oh, I'm awfully sorry, but—but I can't play this afternoon."

"Why not?" demanded the mistress.

"I—I've got to go into detention for—for Miss Druce," stammered Pip in distress.

The games mistress frowned.

"That is very trying of you, Philippa. I may as well tell you that some of the games committee were against your inclusion in the team for that very reason. They were afraid that you would be always missing practices through being kept in. And now here—the very first time—their fears are justified! Well, for this once I will excuse you. But mind that it does not occur again. Remember, you are only chosen provisionally. There are several girls in Middle Fourth who play very nearly as well as you play, and who are both taller and stronger than you. If you want to play in an outside match and so qualify for your colours, you will have to be very regular and punctual in turning up for team practices. Unless you have a really legitimate excuse—are kept away by some unavoidable cause, *not* because you have been sent into detention for naughtiness!—I shall not excuse your non-attendance another time."

"Oh dear!" sighed Pip, when the mistress had departed. "I really shall have to turn over a new leaf now. Just think of being a member of the Second! Isn't it just too glorious for words!"

"Tophole!" said Susie heartily. "You must certainly keep out of scrapes, old thing, for the future. You mustn't risk losing your colours now. Fancy a member of Four B sporting colours! My hat! We'll be one up on Middle Four now!"

"Let's come and tell the rest of the form," suggested Aileen, and the three tore down the corridor to the Lower Fourth sitting-room, where they triumphantly announced the glorious news of Pip's promotion.

The other members of Four B were every bit as delighted as they were themselves. In spite of her propensity for mischief and her absolute genius for tumbling into scrapes—possibly because of them!—Pip was quite the most popular person in her form, and nobody grudged her the tremendous distinction which had befallen her. The members of Four B would have been proud and pleased at any one of their number being chosen for a place in the second eleven and so being given a chance of winning her colours—colours at St. Cecilia's were given to any girl who had represented her school in an outside match. That Pip should be the chosen one filled them all with unalloyed delight, and they entered keenly into the plans Pip began to make for obtaining a new hockey stick and some proper hockey boots.

"I must get a stick, anyway," said Pip. "My old one isn't good enough to practise with the Second. I'll get permission to write home to-day for some cash, and, Susie, you and I and Aileen must put our names down for the next shopping expedition and get one at Dolton's."

"Yes, you must certainly have a new

stick," said Phyllis Clynton. "If your people won't stump up for it, we'll have to have a whip round of the form for subscriptions to buy you one. But I expect they will when they hear what an honour's been done you. Fancy a junior being promoted to the Second!"

"What a sell it will be for Middle Four!" remarked Rita Deans. "They all thought that Edith Hart would have been chosen unless someone had been picked from Upper Fourth."

"Yes, we've scored over Middle Four this time," said Phyllis. "Pip, you must play up and get made a permanent member! You mustn't let slip such a glorious chance of winning your colours now!"

"No, she mustn't! We've all got to see that she doesn't," Susie put in. "She's got to miss the practice this afternoon through being kept in. But Miss Parr's excused her just this once, and we've all to look after her and see that she doesn't go getting into any more scrapes all the rest of the term."

"Yes, Pip! You'll really have to turn over a new leaf now," chorused the members of Four B.

"Oh, I'm going to!" said Pip eagerly. "I'm going to be so good that you'll none of you know me! No more toffee-making in the science-room or pillow-fights in the dorm! No more returned lessons or late marks! I'm just not going to risk getting into a single row with anybody for the whole of the rest of the term!"

And then, just at that moment, in came Moira Hill, Sheila Morris's fag, with eyes as big as saucers and a scared look on her little round face.

"I say! What do you think?" she said in awe-struck tones as she came into the room. "Sheila Morris has had her study ragged!"

(To be continued)

A Bitter-Sweet Memory

By Irene M. Overton

Reader, I'll introduce myself—my name is Bitter-Sweet,
Folks say my head's devoid of brains—perhaps they're in my feet
(Personally I think they are. I ask how otherwise
Can one account for the stern fact of their outrageous size?).
All learning is a fag to me, and so I do not mind
Admitting—like the donkey's tail—I'm very much behind.
At school, whatever form I'm in, I always can depend
Upon a stationary seat towards the lower end.
But still, I'm not an *utter* dud—I know a thing or two!
For instance—that the Red Sea isn't ever green or blue;
That brussels sprouts and carpets are Belgian, don't you see,
'Cause Brussels is in Belgium—not France or Germany.
But interest doesn't interest me—I think all sums are rot—
And vulgar fractions (rightly named) confuse me quite a lot;
While as for books, I never want to turn the wretched pages,
I'm more absorbed in treacle tarts than prehistoric ages.
So, when examinations come you'll very plainly guess,
Figuratively speaking, I am somewhat in a mess;
Imagine my astonishment when the last term had run
(Or rather crawled, to be correct, for swotting is no fun!)
To learn that in all subjects I had come out first and best,
And every prize was mine with none left over for the rest!
I thought of Pater's beaming pride, and Mater's quiet elation,
And I grew as great as Cæsar in my own estimation;
And, when the great Day came at last, with solemn steps and slow
I mounted to the platform, while a great crowd cheered below.
The prizes nearly reached the roof—such things I'd hankered for—
Gramophones, model aeroplanes, and tuck-boxes galore.

* * * * * *

But when I turned and saw the Head—his spectacles agleam—
Gaily clad in pink pyjamas—then I knew it was a dream!

La S. Barthelemi

A French Play

By

F. H. Harris

CAST:

JACQUELINE (aged 16) }
YVONNE (aged 10) . . } *Orphan nieces and nephew of the Vicomte de Boisy d'Argenton (Huguenots).*
MICHEL (aged 8) . . }

SCENE I.—*Boudoir of the Château de Boisy d'Argenton in Touraine.* August 1st—morning.

SCENE II.—*Salon of the Vicomte de Boisy d'Argenton's house in Paris.* August 24th—8 p.m.

SCENE III.—*The Same*—2.50 a.m.

SCENE IV.—*The Same*—at dawn.

Place: France. *Period:* 1572.

SCENE I.

Boudoir of the Comte d'Argenton's château in Touraine. (Door, R. *and* L. *Centre-back, cupboard.* L.C., *Table with flower-vases.* R.C., *arm-chair.)* MICHEL *is lying in chair, learning lessons aloud.*

Michel. Mensa—mensa—mensas—— Non, ce n'est pas ça! Mensa—mensa—mensam—men—men—— Oh, que je déteste les leçons! [*Throws book on ground.*] Rien que du latin, du grec, et de l'histoire. Oh, que je m'ennuie! Rien à faire, rien à manger. [*Prowls round room, finds a cake in cupboard, and eats.*] Bon! [*Listens carefully at doors, takes an apple out of his tunic, then puts it hastily back.*] On vient! C'est Yvonne!

[*Voice outside heard singing:* "Il était une bergère . . . "]

[*Enter,* R., YVONNE *singing, her arms full of flowers.*]

Yvonne. Tiens, te voilà, Michel! Je te cherchais. Pourquoi n'es-tu pas sorti dans le jardin? Il fait si beau.

Michel. Parceque je n'avais pas encore fini mon latin. [*Scowling and kicking chair.*] Je déteste le latin.

Yvonne. [*Putting flowers on table.*] Mais c'est fini maintenant, n'est-ce pas? Voilà ton livre par terre. [*Picks up book.*] Veux-tu chercher de l'eau pour mes fleurs, Michel?

Michel. [*Lolling in chair.*] Non.

Yvonne. Paresseux! Mais va donc, Michel. Sois gentil. Je suis fatiguée. Il fait si chaud au jardin, et j'ai cueilli toutes ces fleurs.

Michel. Je déteste les fleurs, et tu es sotte de les avoir cueillies.

Yvonne. Mais c'est pour aider Jacqueline; et je ne suis pas sotte, monsieur.

Michel. Si, tu es sotte.

Yvonne. [*Getting angry.*] Tais-toi, petit insolent! [*Goes up to him threateningly; starts back, pointing.*] Oh, regards donc! Ton habit est couvert de miettes. Tu as volé des gâteaux.

Michel. [*Getting up.*] Ce n'est pas vrai. [*Apple rolls out of his tunic.*]

Yvonne. [*Pouncing on it.*] Et tu as volé une pomme aussi. [*Pointing.*] Oh, le gourmand; oh, le voleur; oh, le menteur!

Michel. [*Trying to get back apple.*] Je n'ai pas volé la pomme; je l'ai trouvée.

Yvonne. [*Holding it out of his reach.*] Trouvée? Où?

Michel. Je l'ai trouvée sur un arbre.

Yvonne. Oh, tu l'as trouvée sur un arbre! Mais c'est voler tout de même, mon petit Michel. [*Snatches apple.*]

Michel. Rends-moi ma pomme; rends-moi ma pomme! [*They fight.*]

[*Enter,* R., JACQUELINE.]

Jacqueline. C'est très joli, ça; très joli! Vous n'êtes pas honteux de vous battre comme de petits sauvages?

Michel. Oh, Jacqueline, elle a pris ma pomme. Rends-moi ma pomme. Yvonne! Rends-moi ma pomme!

Jacqueline. [*Looking at apple which she has taken from Yvonne.*] Tu ne peux pas l'avoir. Elle n'est pas mûre. Elle te donnerait la colique.

Michel. [*Furiously.*] Je veux ma pomme; je veux ma pomme.

Yvonne. [*Teasingly.*] Enfant gâté; veux-tu du pâté? Enfant gâté, veux-tu du pâté?

[MICHEL *flies at her.*]

Jacqueline. [*Pulling them apart.*] Ne le taquines pas, Yvonne. [YVONNE *continues singing:* "Enfant gâté," *etc.*] Eh, bien, puis que vous êtes si méchants tous les deux, je ne vous dirai pas la grande nouvelle que l'Oncle Richard vient de me dire. [*She goes to door,* R. *They rush after her and pull her back, one by each arm.*]

Yvonne. [*Coaxingly.*] Non, non, Jacqueline; *chère* Jacqueline; *jolie* Jacqueline; *aimable* Jacqueline; dites-la nous!

Michel. Belle Jacqueline; *gentille* Jacqueline; *charmante* Jacqueline; dites-la nous! Maintenant nous sommes sages comme des images.

[*They settle her in chair and sit on the arms of it.*]

Jacqueline. [*Laughing.*] Eh bien, figurez-vous que l'Oncle Richard a reçu une lettre de la Reine-Mère.

Yvonne. La reine Catherine de Medici?

Jacqueline. Oui, et elle invite Oncle Richard à Paris au mariage de la Princesse Marguerite de Valois avec le Roi Henri de Navarre.

Michel. Oh, Jacqueline!

Jacqueline. Et Oncle Richard dit—voici la grande nouvelle—que si nous sommes sages—

très, très sages—il nous emmenera, tous les trois, à Paris avec lui.

Yvonne. Nous irons à Paris avec Oncle Richard? Oh, la bonne nouvelle! [*She seizes Michel's hands and they dance round together.*]

Jacqueline. [*Warningly.*] Mais il faut être sage—très, très sage.

Michel. Oh, oui, très sage. Mais—[*hangs his head*]—j'ai—j'ai—— Oh, Jacqueline, j'ai volé un gâteau ce matin. Je suis méchant.

Jacqueline. Pas maintenant, puisque tu l'as avoué. Je te pardonne. C'est fini.

Michel. [*Sighing.*] Et le gâteau est fini aussi. Maintenant, je vais être sage comme une image. Je vais chercher de l'eau pour les fleurs d'Yvonne. [*He goes out,* L.]

Jacqueline. Tiens, tu as cueilli toutes ces fleurs! Je vais les arranger. [*Puts flowers in vases,* YVONNE *helping her.*]

Yvonne. C'est drôle, tout de même, que Henri de Navarre se marie avec Marguerite de Valois, puisqu'elle est Catholique et Henri de Navarre est Huguenot comme nous.

Jacqueline. Oui, mais je crois que la Reine-Mère veut que la guerre entre les Catholiques et les Huguenots se finisse de la même façon que la guerre des Deux Roses en Angleterre—c'est à dire, par le mariage entre eux de personnages importants—des deux partis opposés, comme celui de Marguerite de Valois et Henri de Navarre; comme autrefois celui de Elisabeth d'York et Henri VII d'Angleterre.

Yvonne. Tiens, Jacqueline; que tu es forte en histoire d'Angleterre.

Jacqueline. C'est Oncle Richard qui vient de me dire tout ça. Il parait que la reine a invité tous les Huguenots pour le mariage. Alors elle veut être très aimable. Plus de guerre! [*Waves flower she is about to put in vase.*] On va être de bons amis maintenant. Voilà Michel avec l'eau!

[*Enter* MICHEL *staggering with heavy jug.*]

Michel. Ph! j'ai chaud! C'est lourd.

Jacqueline. Pourquoi n'as-tu pas demandé à Jean de l'apporter?

Michel. Jean est en haut.

Jacqueline. Tiens, oui! Il prepare les malles de l'Oncle Richard. [*Puts water in vases.*] Voilà, c'est fini! Maintenant, allons chercher Madeleine pour lui dire de préparer nos robes pour Paris. Il faut prendre nos plus belles robes. Nous n'irons pas au palais avec Oncle Richard, mais nous serons à Paris, tout de même, et il faut être bien-mises. Je prendrai ma belle toilette cramoisie et ma robe de satin jaune. . . . [*They go out talking,* R.]

[MICHEL *creeps back and, looking about, sees apple on table. Picks it up and is going to take a bite. He hesitates, then puts apple down.*]

Michel. Non, je ne veux pas. J'ai promis d'être sage; et Paris vaut bien une pomme. [*He goes out,* R.]

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

Salon of the Vicomte de Boisy d'Argenton's house in Paris. Evening, August 24th.

[*Door* L., *Window* R., *Chair and embroidery-frame* L.C. *Sofa* R.C. *Clock* L.C. *Centre-back on wall oil-painting of a man in dress of the period. Beneath it, small table bearing a tray of refreshments, a decanter, a silver cup, etc.*] JACQUELINE *is seated at embroidery-frame, sewing, and singing to herself:* "Au clair de la lune."

[*Enter,* L., YVONNE, *drinking out of a silver mug and eating.*]

Jacqueline. Tiens, quelle drôle de manière de prendre ton souper! Pourquoi n'es-tu pas encore couchée? Il est presque huit heures.

Yvonne. Oh, Jacqueline, je n'ai pas sommeil. Laisse-moi rester encore quelques minutes.

Jacqueline. Bien, mais où est Michel?

Yvonne. Dans le vestibule.

Jacqueline. Appelle-le. Il faut qu'il se couche tout de suite.

Yvonne. [*Going to door.*] Michel! Michel!

Michel. [*Entering slowly and looking cross.*] Qu'est-ce que tu veux?

Jacqueline. Il est huit heures. Va te coucher tout de suite.

Michel. Non.

Jacqueline. Veux-tu m'obéir?

Michel. Non, je ne veux pas. André de Coligny ne se couche qu'à neuf heures, et il n'est pas plus âgé que moi.

Yvonne. André de Coligny est un petit sot.

Jacqueline. Oncle Richard sera de retour du palais tout à l'heure, et il sera en colère de te trouver encore en bas.

Michel. Yvonne n'est pas encore couchée.

Jacqueline. [*Crossly.*] Va te coucher tout de suite.

Michel. Je te déteste!

Jacqueline. C'est méchant de dire ça.

Michel. Je vais être méchant—très méchant. Bonsoir, mais je ne vais pas me coucher. [*He goes out* L.]

Jacqueline. Qu'est-ce qu'il veut dire? Il dit qu'il ne va pas se coucher

Yvonne. Oh, il se couchera, bien sûr. Il dit ça pour t'agacer.

Jacqueline. C'est un vrai enfant gâté. C'est la faute de l'Oncle Richard. Notre père ne le gâtait jamais. [*Goes to picture.*] Il y a justement trois ans qu'il est mort sur le champ de bataille de Jarnac, et notre mère est morte quelques semaines après. [*Reflectively.*] Mort sur le champ de bataille. J'espère que Michel sera un héros aussi quand il sera grand. C'est un enfant gâté maintenant, mais il a bon cœur tout de même. [*Looks up at clock.*] Il est huit heures passées, Yvonne.

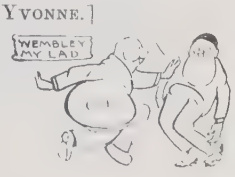
Yvonne. Alors, bonsoir, Jacqueline. [*They kiss.* YVONNE *goes to door.*]

Jacqueline. Bonsoir. Regarde un peu dans la chambre de Michel en passant. S'il n'est pas là, viens me le dire.

Yvonne. Bon.

[YVONNE *goes out* L; JACQUELINE *looks at father's picture again, sighs, then sits down at her work. Re-enter* YVONNE.]

Yvonne. Michel n'est pas dans sa chambre, et Madeleine dit qu'elle ne l'a pas vu.



Jacqueline. C'est drôle! Où est-il alors?

Yvonne. Il se cache, peut-être.

Jacqueline. C'est possible. Va dire à Madeleine et à Jean et aux autres domestiques de chercher tout par tout dans le maison.

Yvonne. Bien. [YVONNE *goes out.*]

Jacqueline. C'est très méchant de la part de Michel. [*Walks about room impatiently.*] Il aura un gros pensum demain.

[*Re-enter* YVONNE.]

Yvonne. Ça y est! Tout le monde cherche. [*Yawns.*]

Jacqueline. Tu as sommeil. Maintenant va te coucher.

Yvonne. Oh non, Jacqueline. Laisse-moi rester ici jusqu'à ce qu'on trouve Michel.

Jacqueline. Bien, si tu veux.

Yvonne. [*Wandering to window and looking out, then turning to* JACQUELINE *suddenly.*] Oh, Jacqueline, s'il est sorti!

Jacqueline. Sorti? Comment, sorti? Dans la rue?

Yvonne. Oui.

Jacqueline. Mon dieu! C'est possible.

Yvonne. N'est-ce pas qu'il a dit qu'il allait être très méchant? C'est bien ça! Je parie qu'il n'est pas caché dans la maison, mais qu'il est sorti tout seul dans la rue.

Jacqueline. Peut-être pour aller chez son ami André de Coligny. Mais c'est loin d'ici. Il se perdra dans les rues. [*Knock at door. Both girls start.* YVONNE *goes to door. Murmur of voices heard. She returns.*]

Yvonne. On a cherché tout par tout, et Michel n'est pas dans la maison.

Jacqueline. Mon dieu, c'est vrai, alors! Il est sorti tout seul. Jean est là?

Yvonne. Oui.

[JACQUELINE *goes to door.*]

Jacqueline. Jean, je pense que Monsieur Michel est sorti dans la rue. Allez chez l'Amiral de Coligny voir s'il est là, et ramenez-le tout de suite.

Voice. Bien, mademoiselle.

Jacqueline. [*Returning to* YVONNE.] Voilà! J'ai envoyé Jean le chercher chez les Coligny. C'est à une demi-heure d'ici d'aller et retour. Nous allons attendre ici.

CURTAIN.

SCENE III

The Same—2.50 a.m [JACQUELINE *and* YVONNE *very agitated.* YVONNE *looking from window;* JACQUELINE *walking about the room.*]

Jacqueline. Presque cinq heures que Jean est parti. Qu'est qu'il fait? Pourquoi n'est-il pas encore de retour? Mon dieu! Et Michel tout seul dans les rues de Paris à minuit! Et Oncle Richard il est bien en retard aussi. Le roi le retient au palais, je suppose.

Yvonne. Voilà un homme qui vient. Il fait si noir je ne vois pas clair. Oui; non—non, ce n'est pas Jean. Oh, que fait-il? Il dessine quelque chose.

Jacqueline. [*Looking over* YVONNE'S *shoulder.*] Tiens, c'est drôle! C'est un soldat. Regarde, donc! Il s'en va. Tu ne vois pas quelque chose sur la grande porte de la maison en face?

Yvonne. Si—quelque chose de blanc.

Jacqueline. Il a fait une grande croix blanche avec de la craie sur la porte. Quelle drôle de chose à faire! Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire? C'est bien drôle.

Yvonne. Il est presque une heure, mais que de monde dans la rue. Crois-tu que Jean s'est trompé de chemin? Il aurait pu le demander.

Jacqueline. [*Turning from window.*] Je crains qu'il ne lui soit arrivé quelque accident.

Yvonne. Oh, Jacqueline, et à Michel aussi, peut être!

Jacqueline. Yvonne, je ne peux plus rester ici. [*Wringing her hands.*] Je ne peux plus. Je vais aller moi-même chercher Michel. S'il est perdu tout seul dans les rues pendant cinq heures, c'est qu'il a peur, c'est qu'il a faim, c'est qu'il est bien fatigué. Je ne peux plus rester ici. Il faut que j'aille le chercher.

Yvonne. Mais tu est trop jeune; tu ne peux pas sortir seule dans les rues.

Jacqueline. [*Hesitating.*] Non, c'est vrai. [*Thoughtfully.*] Que faire alors? [*Brightly.*] Ah, j'ai une idée! Je vais m'habiller en jeune homme.

Yvonne. Jacqueline!

Jacqueline. Oui, je mettrai les habits de notre cousin Charles.

Yvonne. Oh, Jacqueline, quelle comédie! [*Laughs.*] Je viens t'aider.

Jacqueline. Non, reste ici. [*She goes out.*]

Yvonne. [*Alone.*] Qu'elle est courageuse! Ce Michel est un petit diable de jouer un tour pareil. [*Yawns.*] Dieu, que j'ai sommeil! [*Sinks on to sofa. Her head nods.*] Non. [*Starts up.*] Il ne faut pas dormir. Je vais danser pour m'éveiller. Je n'ai pas de cavalier, mais tant pis!

[*She dances the "courante." Re-enter* JACQUELINE *dressed as a man.*]

Jacqueline. [*Laughing and striking an attitude.*] Ne trouve-tu pas que je suis un très beau jeune homme?

Yvonne. Jacqueline, tu es magnifique! On dirait un vrai galant.

Jacqueline. Maintenant à la recherche de ce méchant petit Michel. J'irai d'abord chez les Coligny. Après, je—— [*Sound of gunshot heard in the distance. Both girls start and look at one another.*] Qu'est-ce que c'était? Un coup de pistolet?

Yvonne. Je crois que oui.

Jacqueline. Et du côté du Louvre.

Yvonne. [*Holding up finger.*] Ecoute, donc! N'entends-tu pas quelque chose d'autre?

[*They listen. Church-bell heard tolling.*]

Jacqueline. C'est la cloche d'une église. Cela doit être l'église de S.-Germain l'Auxerrois. Mais pourquoi à cette heure-ci? Il est une heure. Il n'y a pas de service si tard, même chez les catholiques.

Yvonne. C'est la fête de la S.-Barthélemi. C'est à cause de ça, peut-être. Une messe de minuit, probablement.

Jacqueline. Peut-être. Maintenant, en route! [*Goes to door.*]

Yvonne. [*Rather frightened.*] Tu ne seras pas longtemps, Jacqueline?

Jacqueline. Je reviendrai le plus tôt possible, si je trouve Michel. N'aies pas peur, Yvonne. Au revoir. [*Goes out.*]

Yvonne. [*Alone.*] Tout de même, il est très tard pour se promener dans les rues. Mais qu'elle est bien dans ce costume-la! Personne ne saurait que c'est une jeune fille. [*Laughs and goes to window; points, still laughing.*] La voilà! Elle traverse la rue. Elle est sur l'autre trottoir. Voilà un homme qui passe et qui la regarde. Il a une épée à la main. Il se retourne. Il—— [*Screams loudly and falls back from window.*] Oh, non—non—non! Ce n'est pas possible! Il l'a tué! Il a tué Jacqueline. [*Returns, almost fainting with fright to the window.*] Il est parti! Elle se lève. Elle n'est pas morte! Elle se traine à travers la rue. Oh! [*Sinks fainting on sofa. Revives as slow, dragging footsteps are heard outside.*]

[*Re-enter* JACQUELINE, *her face chalk-white, her doublet blood-stained. She staggers and falls.*]

Yvonne. [*Rushing to help her.*] Jacqueline! Mon dieu—mon dieu!

Jacqueline. [*Faintly.*] De l'eau.

Yvonne. [*Rushing out of room.*] Madeleine! Madeleine!

[*Returns with water.* JACQUELINE *drinks and revives a little.* YVONNE *helps her up on to sofa.*]

JACQUELINE. [*Faintly.*] Un homme m'a presque tué. Il criait, "Mort aux Huguenots! Mort aux Huguenots!" Ça me fait mal ici, à l'épaule gauche.

Yvonne. [*Pulling open doublet and showing blood-stained shirt, then rushing to door.*] Madeleine! Madeleine! Elle ne vient pas. Je te panserai! Du linge; de l'eau! [*Seizes napkin from drawer of table, and water, and tries frantically, crying all the time, to staunch the bleeding.*]

Jacqueline. Aïe! aïe! Ça me fait mal. Ne pleures pas, Yvonne.

Yvonne. Je t'ai vue de la fenêtre. Ecoutez! —toujours la cloche qui sonne. Des cris dans la rue! [*Runs to window and looks out. Screams.*] Oh! un—deux—trois personnes mortes. Il y a une foule d'assassins. **Ils** ont des mouchoirs blancs autour de leurs bras. Oh, oh! [*Shrinks back from window and returns to* JACQUELINE, *who has collapsed.*] Oh, mon dieu, que faire! Pourquoi Madeleine ne vient-elle pas? Et les autres domestiques, où sont-ils? [*Goes to door.*] Madeleine! Jean! Rosalie! Pierre! [*Listens, then returns to* MADELEINE.] C'est qu'ils ont peur et qu'ils sont tous enfermés en haut dans leurs chambres. Que faire! Ah! [*Seizes decanter from table.*] De l'eau-de-vie! [*Pours out brandy and makes* JACQUELINE *drink some.*]

Jacqueline. [*Coughing a little, and reviving.*] Ça fait du bien. Aide-moi maintenant. [*Tries to get up.*]

Yvonne. Mais non, reste là

Jacqueline. Je peux marcher. Allons. [*Gets up and stands grasping back of sofa, then draws sword and makes towards door slowly.*]

Yvonne. [*Horrified.*] Mais où vas-tu, donc?

Jacqueline. [*Facing round.*] Je vais chercher Michel.

Yvonne. Mais non! C'est impossible! Des choses épouvantables se passent dans les rues. Ecoutez! Des cris, des coups de pistolets. [*Noises heard outside.*] Des assassins! C'est un massacre. On tue les Huguenots! Oh, mon dieu!

[*Cries and screams and shouts heard outside.*]

Jacqueline. [*Shuddering and leaning against wall.*] Oui, c'est un massacre. Alors, plus que jamais il faut que je sorte encore pour chercher Michel. Il est seul—perdu dans cet enfer! [*Points at window.*]

Yvonne. On te tuera. Tu es Huguenotte. Ne t'en vas pas, ne t'en vas pas!

Jacqueline. Il faut que j'aille. Il n'y a personne d'autre. Oncle Richard ne vient pas. C'est qu'il est déjà tué, peut-être, ainsi que Jean. Il n'y a que moi. [*Turns to portrait.*] Oh, mon père, tu es mort, mais viens avec moi pendant cette nuit funeste. Que ton esprit vaillant m'accompagne et m'aide à trouver Michel. Donne-moi de ton courage, car je suis lâche. J'ai peur. [*Shudders and looks towards window, then pulls herself together.*]

Yvonne. [*Quickly.*] Attends! J'ai une idée. J'ai remarqué par la fenêtre que tous les assassins portent quelque chose de blanc autour de leurs bras. Si tu le faisais aussi! Peut-être ça empêcherait les assassins de te tuer. C'est sans doute le signe des Catholiques pour cette nuit fatale. [*Ties handkerchief round* JACQUELINE'S *right arm.*]

Jacqueline. Comme tu veux. Maintenant, au revoir. [*They kiss, and* JACQUELINE *goes out after a last look at father's picture and saluting it with sword.*]

Yvonne. [*Flinging herself down on sofa and bursting into tears.*] Elle sera tuée, elle sera tuée, et je ne la reverrai jamais plus!

CURTAIN.

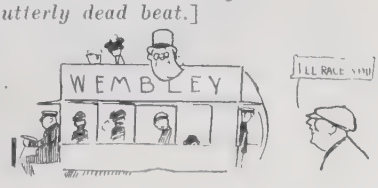
SCENE IV

The Same.—At dawn. [YVONNE *asleep in the same attitude as end of Scene III. She starts, yawns, stretches her arms, and sits up.*]

Yvonne. C'est un bien mauvais rêve! J'ai rêvé que—— Ah! [*Starts back as she picks up blood-stained linen.*] C'est vrai, alors! Ce n'était pas un rêve du tout. Jacqueline est allée chercher Michel. Elle a été blessée. C'est bien vrai. [*Looks at clock.*] J'ai dormi trois heures. Mon dieu, où est-elle maintenant? [*Door slams below. She starts; listens attentively; crouches away from door with her eyes fixed on it apprehensively.*]

[*Enter* JACQUELINE *with* MICHEL. *They walk as if utterly dead beat.*]

Jacqueline. Le voici [*Collapses in chair.* MICHEL *sinks down on sofa.*]



Yvonne. Où l'as-tu trouvé?

Jacqueline. Tout près de Notre Dame. Je meurs de soif. Donne-moi de l'eau. [YVONNE *gives her water.*]

Yvonne. A Notre Dame? C'est bien loin d'ici! Grâce à Dieu que tu l'as trouvé. Et ton épaule? Comment ça va?

Jacqueline. Elle me fait mal! [*Shifts her shoulder about painfully.*] Il fallait courir comme des fous, car on nous faisait la chasse; mais au moment où l'on s'est aperçu de ceci [*touches white armlet*], on nous a laissé partir. Il paraît que les Catholiques portent ce brassard blanc, alors c'était une bonne idée de le mettre. Sans cela j'aurais été tuée cent fois, et Michel aussi. [*Wriggles her shoulder again.*]

Michel. [*Coming forward and dropping on his knees beside* JACQUELINE.] Oh, Jacqueline, c'est de ma faute que tu a été blessé. J'ai été si méchant. Je ne le serai jamais plus. [*Weeps.*]

Jacqueline. Ne pleure pas. Je te pardonne. Et tu as été déja puni. Voilà sept heures que tu es perdu dans les rues, presque mort de fatigue et de peur. Va te reposer un peu. [MICHEL *goes slowly to sofa and cries himself to sleep there.*] Figure-toi, Yvonne, que si j'étais arrivé une minute plus tard, il aurait été tué. Un assassin allait le faire juste au moment où je suis arrivée. Ah, les choses épouvantables que j'ai vues cette nuit! Des hommes, des femmes, des enfants, même des bébés, tués par ces diables. Mais nous ne pouvons pas rester ici. On force les portes, on entre dans les maisons. Il faut que nous nous sauvons—mais où?

[*Knocking heard.*]

Yvonne. Mon Dieu, on vient nous tuer!

Jacqueline. [*Listening.*] Ce n'est pas à la grande porte. C'est à la petite porte qui donne sur la rue à côté. Je vais regarder par la fenêtre de l'escalier. C'est peut-être un ami. [*Makes an effort to get up.*]

Yvonne. [*Pushing her back in chair.*] Reste là. Cette fois c'est à moi d'y aller.

Jacqueline. Bien! Mais n'ouvres qu'un volet un tout petit peu, et vois qui est là avant d'ouvrir la porte. [*Yvonne goes out.*] Allons, Michel, ne pleure plus. Viens ici. [MICHEL *does not move.* JACQUELINE *walks painfully across and sees he is asleep.*] Pauvre petit! Il doit être bien fatigué. Quel bonheur que j'ai pu le trouver et le protéger. [*Turns to father's picture.*] C'est grâce à toi! Merci de m'avoir aidée. [*Turns quickly to door.*]

[*Enter* YVONNE *with letter and ring.*]

Yvonne. Jacqueline, c'est une religieuse du couvent à côté. Cette lettre est de l'Oncle Richard, qui est dans le couvent, paraît-il. [*Tears open letter and reads.*]

"Le 25 août, 1572.

"MES ENFANTS,

"Je suis blessé. Des religieuses m'ont trouvé presque mort dans la rue et m'ont apporté ici au couvent du Sacré Cœur, où elles me soignent. Venez ici vite, tous les trois. Il n'y a pas un instant à perdre. La religieuse qui apporte cette lettre vous conduira.

"De votre ONCLE RICHARD tout dévoué."

Et voici sa bague qu'il nous envoie pour nous donner confiance. [*Hands ring to* JACQUELINE.]

Jacqueline. [*Taking ring.*] C'est bien sa bague. Pauvre Oncle Richard! J'espère qu'il n'est pas grièvement blessé.

Yvonne. La religieuse dit qu'il est grièvement blessé, mais pas mortellement, et elle dit que nous serons tous en sécurité au couvent. Les assassins n'osent pas y entrer, même pour chercher les Huguenots qui y sont réfugiés.

Jacqueline. Allons, en route! [*Gets up and goes to sofa.*] Viens, Michel! [*Shakes him.*] Nous allons dans un couvent où nous trouverons Oncle Richard.

Michel. Oh, Jacqueline, je suis si fatigué! [*Rubs his eyes.*]

Yvonne. Tu peux dormir autant que tu veux là-bas, et il n'y a pas d'assassins là.

Jacqueline. Grâce à Dieu!

[*They go out,* JACQUELINE *leaning on* YVONNE *and holding* MICHEL'S *hand.*]

CURTAIN.

LITTLE FOLKS DRAMATIC CLUB

"Entertainer" will be glad to give information on Amateur Theatricals, the choice of a play, etc. Write—enclosing a stamped addressed envelope—to "Entertainer," LITTLE FOLKS Office, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.4

ZOO BABIES

Five Ibex Kids born at the Zoo

Photo: Alfieri

Baby Llamas out for a morning's walk

AN ANXIOUS MOMENT

When in doubt ask Uncle Useful

(*Drawn by T. Mackenzie*)

Pets and Pastimes Pages

By UNCLE USEFUL

A Camera Worth Having!

THE Editor sent me a "Sportie" camera to try the other day, and I had a very happy hour making eight exposures with it. I tried it on the dog first—I believe that is the proper thing to do; I took photographs up and down my garden; I experimented on one of the goats; and I photographed a miniature haystack with children atop, romping to their hearts' content. Some of these little pictures you will find in these pages this month. They were taken on an early day in April with the sun shining not too brightly, and the pictures give promise as to what can be done in the real summertime, when the sun will be higher in the heavens.

From what I have seen of this little camera I believe that readers can do a great deal with it. I want them all to try and get one and I want them to send me some of the prints they make with its aid.

Let me briefly describe the camera. It is a little chap, $3\frac{3}{4}$ in. long, $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide and $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. high—these are the dimensions when it is in position for taking a vertical picture. It takes a picture $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide by $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, either horizontal or vertical.

What the "Sportie" can do. Another Garden View

A Corner of the Garden

It is a box camera with what is known as a "fixed focus" lens; that is, for anything more than four or five feet away everything is in focus. It takes a roll film, C27 Carbine, and all other makes of films—Kodak or otherwise—of the same size. Vest-pocket Kodak films fit it perfectly.

Inserting the Film

The film is very easily loaded into place. Gently lift the metal catch at the back of the camera clear of the pin and open the back or door. You will see two film spaces or pockets, one at the top and one at the bottom. In the top is a little metal spool all ready to wind the film on. To put the film in place all you need to do is first to break the paper seal and then push the film exactly as it is into the bottom space. Pull out three or four inches of the red paper. The outside of this red paper should go to the outside of the camera; in other words, once the spool of film is in place you should not be able to see the inside of the red paper. As I have said, there is in the top pocket a little metal spool containing a narrow slot, wider on one side than on the

other. Turn the spool round until you see the widest edge of this slot. Insert into it the tapered end of the red paper and give the winding button at the side of the camera one or two gentle turns. Now close the back of the camera. This will have the effect of pushing into its place the spool of film in the bottom pocket, should this be inclined to rise slightly. Now gently turn the winding button—it will only go in one direction—and watch through the red hole in the camera back. A warning hand will in due course appear. After that go very slowly. Then will come the figure "1." Stop winding when this figure is right in the middle of the red sighting hole. Now everything is ready for the first exposure.

Looking in at the window. A corner of Uncle Useful's house

Snapshot Exposures

There are three things of which particular notice is to be taken. The snapshot or instantaneous device, the time-exposure device, and the view-finder. Both of the exposure devices are practically the same as in any ordinary snapshot camera. At the top of the camera in front is a little trigger. Pushing it either way makes what is often called an "instantaneous" exposure. Now what is the right time and place to use this? The lens is small and the "instantaneous" exposure very brief. These two things mean that only a very small amount of light gets through to the sensitive film when the shutter is open. As the amount is small, the quality of the light must be good. You will be able to judge somewhat of the exposure by the little pictures reproduced herewith. Every one of them is a snapshot taken on a clear morning in early April. On a June morning they would have been distinctly pluckier and brighter. At the seaside in the summer holidays this camera will give simply splendid results, as indeed it will at all other times when the light is good and the people or other objects to be photographed are standing clear of shade. Intelligent boys and girls will learn a great deal from their first exposures. Experience will show them what can and what cannot be taken by the snapshot method.

Time Exposures

Fortunately, with the "Sportie" camera any length of time exposure can be given, varying from a second or two to several hours if so desired. Perhaps you will smile at this idea and think that a photographic film that had been exposed for several hours would be in a very terrible state. But there are many dark interiors of churches and historic buildings where, unless one uses artificial light, which frequently is not allowable, an exposure of three-quarters of an hour to an hour or two will be found necessary to register all the details. This little camera could be used for this purpose because its lens gives quite good definition; that is, there is nothing blurry or indistinct about the picture that it gives. It is a nice sharp little picture that will give pleasure to the average boy and girl photographer.

How to Get Them

How do we get time exposures? In the first place the camera *must* be supported on a stand of some kind. At the side of the camera, level with the top of the lens mount, is a little stop which can be withdrawn by means of the thumb-nail to the extent of about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. When it is so withdrawn, pushing it one way opens the lens and pushing it the other way closes it. So to make a time exposure all we do is to withdraw the little stop, find our picture

in the view-finder, and when all is ready open the lens by pushing the trigger to one side. Give the exposure necessary and close the lens again by pushing the trigger the other way.

Of course, you won't forget, will you (of course, I know you *will* forget—just at at first) to wind up the film to the next position *immediately* after making an exposure. If you don't get into the habit of doing it immediately, you will always run the risk of being confused as to whether you have or have not wound the film up; and you will always be in doubt as to whether to wind it up one space and run the risk of having one film blank or of leaving the film as it is and run the other risk of having two pictures on one film. So get into the very good habit—and the very easy one—of winding up the film one space *immediately* after making an exposure.

Withdrawing the Film Spool

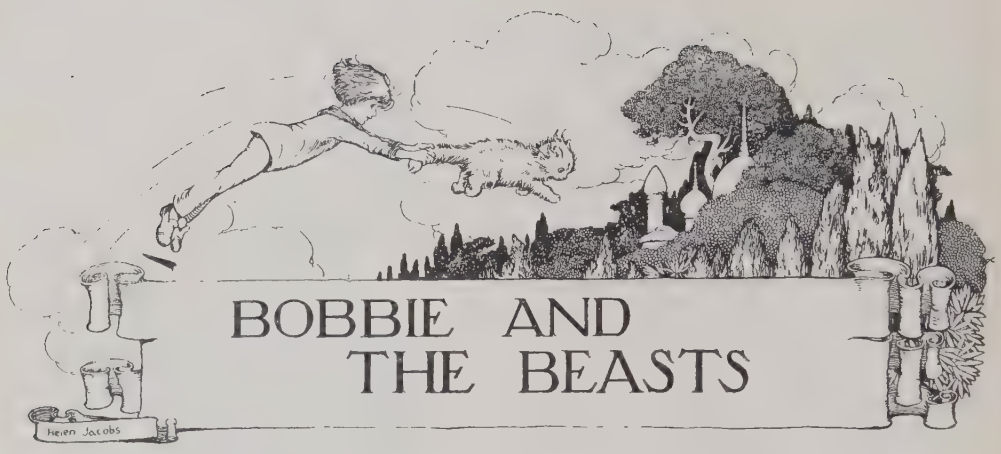
When the whole of the film has been used, continue to wind steadily until you see the end of the red paper pass the sighting hole in the back of the camera. Then lift the catch, release the exposed film by pulling out the winding button, and, by means of the little slip of gummed paper which you will find with the film at the moment of taking it out, stick down the extreme end of the red paper so that it cannot unroll. Then it is ready for developing.

I have no space this month to talk of developing and fixing, but some other time I will give full details. There are little developing tanks on the market in which the whole of the developing can be done in daylight, and although they need a little careful study when on the occasion of their first use, you soon get in the way of using them quite easily and well.

The View Finder

There is one feature of the camera to which, as yet, I have only alluded. That is the view-finder. This is what is known as a "direct-vision" view-finder, and it consists of a little wire frame the exact size of the picture you are going to take, hinged to the front of the camera in such a way that it can fold outwards and project at the side when the camera is in use vertically, or at the top when horizontal pictures are being taken. The use of this finder is simplicity itself, but that does not mean that it can be used with rank carelessness. The camera is held level with the eye: that is to say, the eye gets as near to the little catch at the back of the camera as it can do and looks through the wire frame. In this position, the eye sees just a little less than the picture itself will register, and this is—although perhaps you will scarcely believe it—an advantage. The average boy and girl photographer is rather inclined to work to the very edges of his picture and to trust to luck to get everything in. With the camera held so that the catch at the back is near the eye there is no risk of the camera not including everything which can be seen through the direct vision-finder. Of course, here again a little experience is worth any amount of advice and instruction. Take great care with your first set of exposures. Take particular note of what you see in the direct view-finder and compare it with what you get on your first pictures. This will help you tremendously.

On the Haystack



BOBBIE AND THE BEASTS

By Violet M. Methley

NO. 2.—BOBBIE AND THE DOGS

BOBBIE was one of those people who go on wanting a thing once they have begun. *He* had not forgotten the Elephant's Hair, even if you have, and he was wondering all the time how he could get back to Fairy-Beast-Land.

He knew the way, of course; but, if you try, you will find that it is very difficult to get *into* a picture all by yourself. And Kate, the Kitten, would not help him again; he knew that by her expression, and by the stiff way she held her tail. Bobbie felt snubbed—and it is annoying to be snubbed by a kitten.

It was because Kate was so unfriendly, and there weren't any other beasts in the house, that Bobbie began to think of the Puppy-next-Door.

It was fat and white and round, with enormous paws, which always seemed to be tripping it up, and a ridiculous stump of a tail, which it was always trying to bite. The Puppy-next-Door was inclined to be friendly with Bobbie, but its real master was the Baby-next-Door, who was still much too young to be called a boy, and could not even talk, or eat acid-drops. Bobbie knew that, because he had offered it one and it only screwed up its eyes and roared.

Sometimes when the Baby-next-Door was in its pram on the doorstep, the Puppy was tied to the railings, as though it were a Watch-Puppy, and that was how Bobbie had his next idea.

He was standing on his own doorstep one afternoon, waiting for Nurse to take him to the Round Pond, when the Puppy-next-Door yapped at him from the railings. And Bobbie thought of something so suddenly that he had to do it that exact minute, or not at all.

So he did it.

He ran down the steps and he unfastened the Puppy and he picked it up in his arms, and tore up to the night-nursery as fast as he possibly could.

And he pulled back the bedclothes of his cot, and made a nest for the Puppy, right inside.

"*Do* lie there and be quiet, darling," he said. "And I'll bring you some lovely bikkies, all for yourself."

The Puppy winked one eye solemnly, and then curled itself up into a tight white ball. For it was a lazy little thing, and didn't mind where it went to sleep.

So Bobbie tucked the clothes right over it and ran downstairs, and when Nurse came up from the kitchen he

was standing on the doorstep as good as gold, waiting for her.

Bobbie behaved particularly well that afternoon, and never grumbled a bit when Nurse stopped to look at all the shops in the High Street instead of going straight to Kensington Gardens.

As a matter of fact, whilst she was staring at a bright green hat Bobbie managed to slip into a cake-shop and buy half a pound of very expensive biscuits.

When they got home Bobbie peeped at the Puppy, and it was still sound asleep, so he went down to tea quite happy.

Now, the next thing was to arrange to be sent to bed early, and for once in his life Bobbie found that *very* difficult to manage.

Nurse took no notice of his hints, so at last he did something which I am sure would never have entered your heads, however much you wanted to go to bed. But then I told you in the first place that Bobbie was a *very* naughty boy.

He just tipped his full mug of milk and water right over himself, and *that* did it!

In less than two minutes Bobbie was on his way to bed, pretending that he didn't want to, and Nurse was mopping the table-cloth and saying:

"Of all the mischievous little monkeys! Doing it on purpose, too! If I don't find you in bed by the time I come up, Master Bobbie——"

But of course she did. Bobbie never got into bed so quickly in all his life, and when Nurse came up the Puppy was just beginning to wake.

"There you are, and there you stay!" Nurse said grimly. "And now I've got to wash this suit of yours to get out the nasty staining milk. You just lie quiet, and don't wriggle like that, Master Bobbie, making the bed all of a mess!"

"Very well," Bobbie said meekly. You see he couldn't explain that it was the Puppy who was kicking and licking his ankles.

Nurse went away only just in time. She had hardly gone, when the Puppy gave a strangled kind of bark and burst out from under the clothes, and began to run round and round in circles, panting.

At last it quieted down enough to eat biscuits, and even then it barked all the time. It didn't seem to have been taught that it is rude to bark with your mouth full.

Suddenly Bobbie had an idea, when he remembered what had first made Kate talk. He took one of the biscuits and gave the Puppy half and ate the other half himself. And directly he had swallowed it, sure enough the Puppy began to speak.

"I love 'oo!" it said. "Div' me 'nother bikkie." You see, the Puppy was quite a baby dog, and couldn't speak plainly.

"I'll give you lots and lots more bikkies," said Bobbie, "if only you will take me to Fairy-Beast-Land. I *do* so want to get some Elephant's Hairs."

"Wha's Lellifants?" the Puppy asked, putting his head on one side and wrinkling up his white forehead in a puzzled way.

"Well, anyway, help me to go to Fairy-Beast-Land again," said Bobbie, rather impatiently, because he began to be afraid that the Puppy was too much of a baby to be much use.

"Wha's dat?" asked the Puppy, and Bobbie pointed to the picture.

"Why, you go to it along that road," he said, and the Puppy looked. And suddenly he began to bark furiously, because—although you may not have noticed it—there is a dog in the picture, and he had just caught sight of it.

Next instant he jumped, and Bobbie had only just time to catch hold of his stumpy tail and feel himself flying through the air.

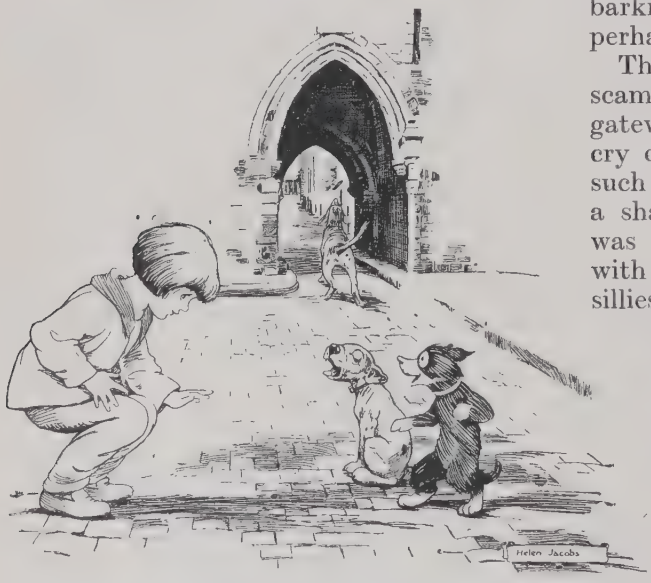
Bobbie gave a big sigh of relief.

There they were, in the middle of the road, under the trees again, with the leaves rustling and the sun shining, and the Puppy was tearing after the other dog as fast as his stumpy legs would carry him!

But Bobbie didn't bother about the Puppy. He just set off along the road to find Fairy-Beast-Land for himself.

The bark of the Puppy grew fainter —and fainter—and fainter. And then Bobbie suddenly found that what he had thought was just the echo of a bark was the bark itself, only it was the wee-est, tiniest bark you ever heard.

It came from the wee-est, tiniest dog you ever saw—a dog no bigger than a large cockroach, but the prettiest, woolliest, whitest thing imaginable. And it was barking just as fiercely as though it had been a Great Dane!



"'But don't you know anybody who can tell me about the Elephant's Hairs?' Bobbie persisted"

Bobbie knelt down, so as to be close enough to talk.

"Oh, you darling!" he said. "Where did you come from?"

"I'm *not* your darling!" the small dog said in a dignified way. "And I came from the story of the 'White Cat.' I am the dog who was small enough to jump through a wedding-ring—and that isn't an easy thing to do, I can tell you!"

"Oh, then I really have got to the Dog part of Fairy-Beast-land!" Bobbie cried. "I'm so glad!"

"Of course you have. If you come with a dog, you'll go to the Dogs—naturally," the tiny dog said. "Do you want to see the Kennels? Be-cause if so, follow me."

It was really quite difficult to follow such a tiny thing, but Bobbie managed it somehow, and presently he knew that they must be getting near the Kennels, because it sounded as though all the dogs in Fairy-Beast-Land were barking at the same time. And perhaps they were.

Then two of them came scampering out through a great gateway, and Bobbie gave a cry of delight, because they were such *very* old friends. One was a shaggy terrier, and the other was fat and white and round, with a pinkish nose, and the silliest, jolliest grin, and a red tongue hanging out of his mouth.

If you don't know them, Bobbie did, and they answered to their names at once when he called—"Pip!" "Bonzo!"

"We've often seen you looking at us," Pip said; and Bonzo squeaked out: "Pleased to meet you! What are *you* doing here?"

"I want some Elephant's Hairs," Bobbie said. "Can you tell me how to get them?"

Pip and Bonzo looked at each other and shook their heads.

"*We* don't know!" they said, both together. "But here's Tray. You'd better ask him."

A very old-fashioned-looking dog was coming towards them, with a red-

brown, curly coat, dangling ears, and a long, thin tail. He walked slowly and sedately, and when Bobbie asked his question he shook his head sadly.

"I fear I cannot give you the desired information," he said, in a particularly tidy voice. "And therefore you will pardon me if I continue my walk."

He trotted off, but suddenly Pip and Bonzo tore after him at full speed, rolled him over in the dust and ruffled his coat. Then they came back, grinning with delight.

"We *have* to do that sometimes," they explained. "We get so tired of hearing him called Good Dog Tray."

"But don't you know anybody who can tell me about the Elephant's Hairs?" Bobbie persisted, and Pip and Bonzo looked at each other again.

"*They* might — eh, Bonzo?" said Pip, and Bonzo winked.

"Yes, he'd better go to *Them*," he said, and Bobbie followed the pair through the great gates of the Kennels.

Presently Bonzo pointed with his paw towards a doorway.

"That's where you go in," he said, and instantly he and Pip turned their stumpy tails on Bobbie and scampered away.

It was a gloomy-looking doorway, and Bobbie did not quite like the mysterious way they had spoken of Them. But he walked in as bravely as he could, and in the first room, which was rather dark, he saw—what do you think?

The biggest dog he had ever seen in his life, sitting on a velvet cushion as big as a mattress, and staring—staring—staring at him, with eyes as big as saucers.

"P-please c-can you tell m-me where to find E-elephant's Hair?" poor Bobbie stammered, and the dog said in a deep bark:

"I don't know!"

Bobbie saw another door, and went through it into a darker room, and here—as he had already guessed—he found a dog with eyes as big as cart-wheels, sitting on a cushion the size of a large room.

"'I'll give you lots and lots more bikkies,' said Bobbie, 'if only you will take me to Fairy-Beast-Land'" (p. 113)

And Bobbie asked the same question and got the same answer, in a louder, deeper bark.

He went through a third door, into a room which was very dark—but I expect *you* have guessed now what he found there. It was the dog with eyes as big as round towers, and he was staring—staring—staring, although he never moved a paw. And *he* answered just the same, in a voice which was like thunder, and frightened Bobbie so much that he began to back away, wondering how he would ever dare to pass the two other great dogs again.

Then just at that moment there came from behind him the jolliest, merriest laugh you ever heard, and when he turned round there was a little ginger-coloured dog throwing back his head and showing all his white teeth, and laughing—laughing.

He laughed so much that Bobbie was obliged to laugh too, and he ran out with the Little Dog quite happily, past the others, without feeling frightened a bit. And still the Little Dog laughed, and laughed, and laughed, until Bobbie tried to ask his question.

"Elephant's Hair!" the Little Dog answered, laughing. "Oh, you do amuse me! Oh, how funny you are! Elephant's Hair, indeed! I've never seen any in my life! Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

"Can't you tell me where the Elephants live?" Bobbie asked; but the Little Dog only laughed again.

"I've never seen any!" he giggled, and poor Bobbie began to feel very discouraged. "You'd better ask the r-r-rabbits!"

"Where are they?" Bobbie asked, and the Little Dog only laughed again.

"*I* don't know!" he said.

So Bobbie went back along the Avenue, with the Little Dog running and laughing beside him. They saw the Puppy-next-Door playing with another hairy puppy, which Bobbie had seen in "Alice in Wonderland," and he wouldn't come when he was called.

"And I don't know how to get out of Fairy-Beast-Land without a tail!" Bobbie said sadly.

"You must use your own Tale!" the Little Dog laughed. "Everybody's got one. Just take a jump—right out!"

So Bobbie shut his eyes and jumped, and the Little Dog went on laughing and laughing. And when Bobbie opened his eyes it was Nurse who laughed, standing at the end of the bed!

"Well, if you'd only seen yourself, along with that Puppy, Master Bobbie!" she said. "But you're a very naughty, mischievous boy to bring him up here, and the People-next-Door rampaging about! I'll take him back at once."

So she carried off the Puppy by the scruff of his neck, and Bobbie snuggled back into bed again.

"I don't believe I'll ever find that Elephant's Hair!" he sighed. "But I *will!*"

(To be continued)

Dignity and Impudence

What happened at the Zoo when Mrs. Tiger went to sleep

(Photo: Gambier Bolton)

CHAPTER III (*continued*)

Out to Sea

RONALD rushed to the bridge rail and looked over anxiously. A few feet away from the side of the yacht he could see a swirl of bubbles where his cousin had dived cleanly into the waves. Of Joan there was no sign at all.

Then, ten feet farther away, he saw her head and shoulders flash up out of the water. She shook the moisture from her eyes and then struck out strongly in the direction of the broken mast. On this mast there was a limp figure, and Ronald could see the knotted ropes that bound it to the splintered wood. Bob Salters had completely disappeared.

Meanwhile the boat had been lowered. One of the ropes by which it had been let down into the water had been tangled and it was over a minute before it could be freed. Then the oars struck the waves, and away it went, with Tom Allen at the helm, steering for the wreckage.

Captain Trevallen came to the rail and stood beside Ronald, looking anxiously after Joan, who was swimming as though she was in a race, turning first on one side and then on the other, her arms flashing out and then burying themselves deep in long, powerful strokes.

"She's a wonder, that girl," said the Cornishman. "Never came across one so prompt in all my born days. She turns to and does things before most of us have started wondering what's happened. Ah, there she goes! She's seen him! She's after him! She'll bring him up, if anyone will!"

Near the wreck Joan had paused, treading water and staring down into its blue depths. Then she put her hands before her, turned over and dived, her stockinged feet twinkling in the sunlight as she disappeared from view. Roger and the captain waited anxiously. Roger was holding his breath, wondering if she was ever coming up again.

"Hurray! Hurray!" he yelled at last. "She's done it!" It seemed to him that she had been under the waves for many minutes; but she was up again now, and they saw that her fingers were gripping tightly in the hair of Bob Salters. Beneath her hand his face gleamed wet and ghastly. She waved her free arm to the boat and then turned towards the broken wreck of a mast again, towing young Salters after her. She got to within a few feet of it when Salters apparently returned to consciousness and began to struggle, for Ronald saw a tremendous commotion and then Joan disappeared.

"He'll drown her! He'll drown her, the silly idiot!" he cried, and started to clamber up on to the rail. Captain Trevallen's hand on his shoulder stopped

him before he had time to dive in to her rescue.

"It's all right, laddie," he said quietly. "Mr. Allen will do all that is necessary. See, the boat is nearly over the spot where she went down. Besides, it will take more than the struggles of a half-drowned boy to upset Miss Joan. Yes! There she is again, and she has him mastered."

Sure enough Joan was on the surface once more, keeping the still slightly struggling Bob Salters well away from her. The watchers on the yacht saw Tom Allen lean out and grip the arm of the boy. Then one of the crew came to his assistance and together they hauled the youngster in. Joan pulled herself up over the side and was immediately wrapped in Mr. Allen's coat. Then the boat turned and pulled the few strokes that separated her from the wreck.

In his excitement at watching Joan's plucky efforts to rescue the boy who had run away from his home near Newquay, Ronald had almost forgotten that there was another person also to be rescued. Now he saw Mr. Allen and the sailors tenderly untying the ropes that bound the inert form to the mast.

"Why, it's another boy!" he said wonderingly. "How on earth did two boys happen to be on that mast?"

"Haven't the slightest idea," was Captain Trevallen's answer. "We shall find out later on, though, I am sure. The youngster Miss Joan lugged out of the water is alive enough, at any rate, whatever has happened to the other poor fellow. One thing I can tell you, and that is that the mast belonged, some time or another, to a smack, a fishing boat, you know. There was a fog last night and the night before. They may have been run down."

Swiftly the boat returned to the yacht, bringing the two rescued boys with her. Joan was first over the side when the boat was made fast and the sailors gave her a cheer as she scrambled up.

"My word, that was awfully plucky of you, Joan," said Ronald, as he went to meet her; but Joan only laughed.

"Don't be so stupid, Ronald," she said. "Someone had to go, and I happened to see him first. And I love swimming!" Then she darted below to change her wet things.

Bob Salters was conscious, though very exhausted, when they brought him on deck; but the other youngster, a pale, dark boy of about sixteen, lay as still as though he was dead. Tom Allen leaned over him and felt, anxiously, for some signs of movement over his heart. The sailors hoisted up the boat and then turned inquiring, sympathetic faces towards the boy.

"He's alive," said the mate, at last. "Come on, some of you. We'll have him right in a jiffy."

Exactly how long a "jiffy" is no one knows; but it was something like twenty minutes before the strenuous artificial breathing exercises, to which the mate and two of the men subjected the boy, met with reward. A little colour came back into his face and he began to breathe naturally.

"*Qu'est—ce que c'est que ça? Qu'arrive?*" he murmured, as his eyes opened. Then he stared round him and smiled faintly into the relieved but still troubled faces of those who had brought him back to life. "*Merci! Merci bien!*" he said, and closed his eyes again.

"French, by Jove!" cried the mate. "Thought he was foreign, somehow."

"Yes, he wants to know what has happened," said Ronald, who understood the French language quite well.

Then Joan came bustling on deck bearing a mug of hot coffee.

"Oh, goody!" she cried. "You've got him round! Splendid! Here, Ronald, make him drink this, if you can. Bob Salters is all right. I've put him in the spare cabin. He'll be quite well again very soon, and then I'm going to find out what has happened and how he came to be on that mast."

Ronald knelt down beside the French boy and lifted up his head. "Here, have a drink, old fellow," he said, and put the hot liquid to his lips.

With eyes still closed the boy took a sip or two. Then he looked up at Ronald and smiled again.

English! Ah, sank you! sank you! Me, I t'ought I die! Zere was anozzer. A boy who arrive to me out of ze sea. You have him? No?"

He looked round him anxiously and tried to sit up, scanning the faces of those around him anxiously.

"Yes, we've got him all right, old chap," said Ronald. "Here, have another drink and then we'll get you down below and into a nice warm bed. Everything is quite all right."

Directly the rescue had been completed

and the boat was safely housed on deck again, Captain Trevallen had signalled "full speed ahead" to the engineer. The *Radio* had now rounded the Lizard and was speeding towards Falmouth.

It was some time before they were able to get from the two rescued boys anything like a connected account of the adventures that had brought them into their unfortunate position; but, when they did, Sparks flashed the message from the *Radio's* aerial, addressing it to both French and English stations, for it concerned the French more than it did the English.

As Captain Trevallen had supposed, a French fishing boat, the *Jean*, of Havre, had been run into and sunk by a steamer during a fog. Young Baptiste, the boy they had rescued, had no idea what had happened to the others of the crew of the little vessel; but presently Sparks was able to tell him that they were reported all safe. They had been picked up by the steamer that had run them down and were now on their way to South America with her. Baptiste had been missed, owing to the fog and the darkness of the night.

Bob Salters was really very ashamed of himself when he came to tell his story, because he knew that he had done a wrong and foolish thing when he had taken a boat from the beach and made off in it.

"But I was desperate, Miss Joan," he said. "Uncle seemed to have gone mad, he beat me so cruelly. And he refused to let me have any more to do with wireless, though he knows I love it more than anything. I thought that perhaps if I could manage to get picked up by some steamer they would let me learn how to be a wireless man. You see I really know quite a lot about it—don't I?—and I would rather earn my keep at wireless than anything else."

"Yes, I quite understand, Bob," said Joan, nodding her head sympathetically. "But it was silly of you. Wireless operators have to have a long training before they go on ships. You could never have won your chance by getting picked up out of the sea. But how did you come to be on that mast?"

"I ran into it in the fog," Bob explained miserably. "And I knocked a hole in old Ben Griffen's boat, and now I suppose I shall have to go to prison."

"You deserve it," Joan told him. "But perhaps we can manage to put things right with Ben Griffen. Directly we have father with us again I will ask him about it."

"Joan and Ronald were staring out over the stern, trying for a glimpse of the brig" (p. 124) *Drawn by Albert Morrow*

"Thank you, Miss Joan," said Bob gratefully. Then he looked up questioningly. "I suppose—I suppose I couldn't stay with you? If I go back to uncle he will beat me again. I know he will. And —and he does hurt, awfully. Look what he did."

Bob sat up in his bunk and wriggled his arm out of the sleeping jacket of Ronald's he was wearing. Joan bit her lips with indignation when she saw that his back was covered with weals and bruises, with here and there a nasty cut.

"Oh, you poor kid!" she cried. "You can't go back to that horrid old man! You can't. I'll never speak to him again! Never!"

"He did it with his belt," Bob explained.

At that juncture Ronald came to the door of the cabin, with a message that his uncle was in communication with the yacht again. So Joan left Bob Salters to go to sleep and went to the wireless cabin. She got there too late to speak with her father, for he had switched off; but Sparks had his message written down. It was simply that he had completed his important business and was flying back to Falmouth. Captain Trevallen was to get in the necessary stores for a long voyage as quickly as possible and be ready to proceed without delay.

"But we shall have to settle the affairs of those two fellows," said Ronald. "Uncle won't be best pleased to find we have them on our hands. What do you think we had better do with them, Joan? Captain Trevallen says that the best thing is to send Baptiste to a hospital until he can be transferred to the care of the French authorities, and that Bob Salters must be put in a train for Newquay, in charge of the guard, directly we get into port."

"Did you see Bob's back, Ronald?" asked Joan solemnly. "Did you chance to see it when you came to the cabin just now?"

Ronald nodded and looked at her questioningly.

"I think I'd like to keep him with us for the voyage, if father will let me," said Joan. "We could easily make room for him forward, and he would be useful for washing up and things like that. And we could let him help in the wireless room. Sparks and I could soon teach him things."

"That's just what I was thinking about Baptiste," said Ronald, with a laugh. "I had him put in my cabin for the time being. Until he is better, you know. I've been having a chat with him and he's a topping chap. No end of pluck, and he knows a tremendous lot about fishing. He says that he is an orphan, and that as his uncle, who was skipper of the boat that was run down, won't be back from South America for ever so long he has nowhere he can go. I say, Joan, let's persuade uncle to keep them both with us."

And that is how it came about that the little *Radio*, at the very outset of her long voyage in search of the Golden Ray, had two members added to her crew. Ronald and Joan managed to talk Captain Trevallen into doing nothing about the two youngsters until Dr. Bastable came on board. When he did arrive, to find the fresh stores on board and everything ready for sailing, he moved swiftly. He sent off a wireless to the French authorities at Havre, a wire on the land-line to old Salters, and telegraphed a money order to pay Ben Griffen for his wrecked boat.

Salters' answer came first. It was short and to the point.

"The boy chose to run away. He can stay away.—Salters."

"Now you're happy, Joan," said Dr. Bastable. "Sign him on as a steward if he still wants to come with us. He played the fool, but he has had his punishment. And tell Trevallen to cast off. We'll pick up the French answer at sea. If they want the boy back we can put into Brest tomorrow morning and leave him there."

The reply did not come for nearly half an hour after they had set out from Falmouth; but all it said was that there was no possible objection to Baptiste Lefevre making a voyage on the *Radio* provided that an exact record of his account of the sinking of the *Jean* was posted from the yacht's first port of call.

"Goodness knows where that will be," said Dr. Bastable; "but we'll do it, of course. I think he had better stay in your berth for the night, Ronald. In the morning he should be fit to move into other quarters. I think we can fix him up with Bob in a little cubby-hole all to themselves."

Having decided to take these two youngsters along, to please his daughter and his nephew, Dr. Bastable dismissed the matter from his mind. He had more important things to think about. He was not to know that before the voyage was finished he would bless the day that had brought both young Salters and the French fisher boy on board his yacht.

"Now for some explanations," said the scientist. "Come into the chart-room, Joan and Ronald, and I will tell you what we are going to do. The Golden Ray has been causing even more trouble than I had supposed for some weeks past, and I have an absolutely free hand to find out where it is coming from and what it is."

He led the way to the tiny cabin behind the bridge where the yacht's charts were kept and pulled out a big map comprising the whole world. On it a thick black line

was drawn. This line started from Newquay and went almost due south-west across more than half the world. It passed through a dotted part of the ocean marked "Sargasso Sea"; went over the West Indies and the southern part of the Spanish Main; and then, crossing the narrow part of the land joining North and South America it passed by thousands of the Pacific Islands and ended up on the coast of Tasmania.

"That line is the one given by my instruments as the path of the Ray," Dr. Bastable explained. "From somewhere along that line the Ray started and we must follow it as closely as we can until the mystery is solved."

Roger bent over the map and followed the course of the line with glowing eyes. It seemed to him that it passed through almost every place he had read about in books of adventure.

"My word! I hope we have to go right down to Tasmania," was all he said. Then he thought a little. "Why, uncle, if you don't find the beginnings of the Ray this side of America we shall have to go through the Panama Canal."

"Quite right," Dr. Bastable agreed. "And as your father says that you may go the whole way with us, Ronald, you may see some curious things before we turn the bows of the *Radio* homewards again."

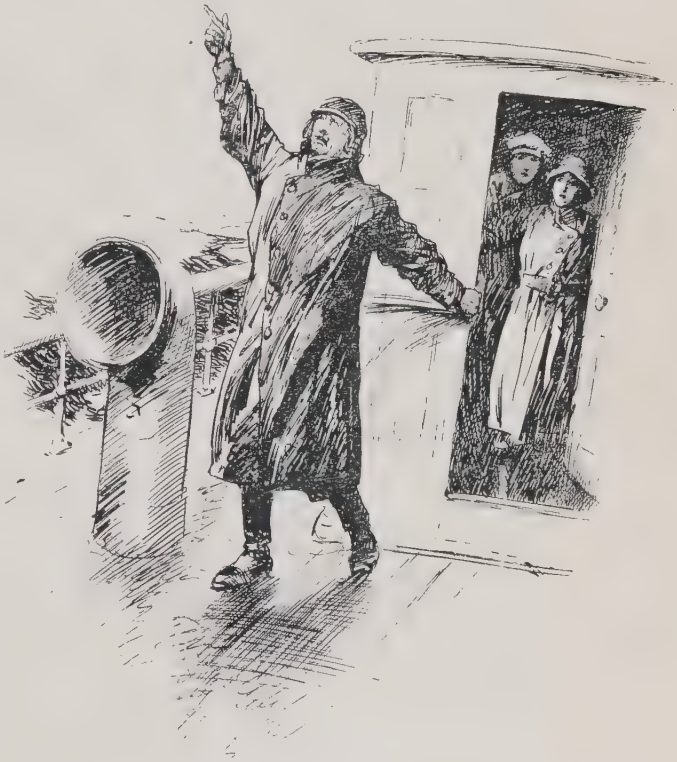
CHAPTER IV

A Rough Time

THE little *Radio* was four days out from Falmouth and rapidly nearing that great mystery track of ocean known to sailor men as the "Ship Cemetery," and to map makers as "The Sargasso Sea."

So far the weather had been good, but now there was a black and sullen look in the sky and, along the horizon, pale bluish flames of lightning flickered.

"We're in for a blow," said Tom Allen, pacing up and down the bridge with Ronald at his side, whilst Joan stood with her hands resting on the top of the "dodger"—a canvas strip placed round the bridge, chin high, to keep off wind, rain and spray—searching the surrounding sea with a pair of glasses. "Yes, we shall have it within a couple of hours or so, and then we'll find out what sort of a sailorman you are becoming, young fellow. This little hooker will roll! My word, how she'll roll when a really big sea gets up! And she'll pitch! Wow! How she'll pitch! Her propellers will race when they come out of the water and she'll shiver and shake until it seems as though she was going to shift her insides out. And then, my bonny boy, unless you've really found your sea legs and your sea stomach, you'll be very unhappy."



"'No hope! Not a hope! Every signal wiped out!' he cried" (p. 125)

Drawn by Albert Morrow

"Well, it's got to come sometime or another, so it may as well come now," said Ronald philosophically. "But if you think you're going to frighten me, Mr. Allen, you're very much mistaken."

"That's the stuff to give 'em!" laughed Tom Allen, and then his face sobered. "But I reckon we shall all be frightened

and not ashamed to own it, before the night's out. Unless I'm mistaken it's going to be a regular rip snorter."

"Then perhaps we'll pick up an S O S and be able to rush to the rescue," said Ronald.

At that Tom Allen grunted and walked across the bridge to take the glasses from Joan. If the truth were known he thought it not unlikely that they would themselves be sending out the dreaded call for help, if the whole fury of the centre of the storm hit them.

Ronald had been hard at work each day trying to pick up the fascinating Morse code. Already he could read slow signals quite well, and spent many hours in the wireless cabin, with a spare pair of 'phones on his head, trying to read the bewildering roar of dots and dashes that seemed to fill the whole ether. He knew that the skilled operator trains himself to listen to one set of signals only and ignore the rest, but, as yet, he found this difficult. It was much easier when they tuned in on the stations that sent out long wave-lengths, like the time signals from the Eiffel Tower, or the slow news and weather forecast messages that our Air Ministry broadcast at certain hours each day. There were comparatively few stations working on these wave-lengths; but on the six hundred metre waves used for signalling between ships it seemed to him that he must be hearing every ship in the whole world.

It was when, on the third day out, he had copied down a complete weather forecast sent out by Eiffel Tower, and Dr. Bastable had said that soon he would trust him to stand a watch in the wireless room, that he had first thought how exciting it would be to hear the S O S, and wonder how long it would be before he really did hear it. Then, whilst he was standing there on the bridge, an S O S came. It was not a wireless distress signal, though, but the old-fashioned kind made with flags.

When Tom Allen went to take the powerful glasses from Joan it was because his keen eyes had made out something unusual on the face of the waters. He was carefully scanning this through the glasses when the look-out gave tongue.

"Brig two points to starboard, sir," he shouted. "'Fore topmast gone and she's a heavy list to port."

"I've got her," the mate replied, and spoke over his shoulder to the helmsman. "Two points starboard."

"Ay, ay, sir," came the response. "Two points starboard it is."

Then Tom Allen pressed a button that rang a bell in the skipper's cabin. This might be a question of rescuing a crew or even of towing, and he could not take the responsibility on his own shoulders, though he had seen through the glasses the distress flag and the inverted ensign that are a sure call to any sailorman.

Captain Trevallen came up on the bridge three steps at a time, and Dr. Bastable, who had been working in the wireless cabin, quickly followed him.

"British collier brig, sir," said the mate, handing the glasses to his captain. "Cargo shifted, by the look of her. Lost some of her top hamper. Must have caught a squall."

Captain Trevallen nodded and peered through the glasses, whilst Joan and Roger looked anxiously through the gathering darkness of the approaching storm to where the unhappy vessel wallowed in the great oily waves that were the forerunners of the approaching tempest.

"We must do our best for her, eh, sir?" asked the captain of Dr. Bastable.

"It's little enough we can do, I'm afraid," was the quiet answer. "But, of course, we'll do our best. I leave it in your hands entirely, Trevallen."

The little *Radio*, urged by her powerful engines, seemed fairly to leap through the waves and came up on the distressed brig swiftly. As they drew near they could see that she was, indeed, in a sorry state. Her boats were all gone and her bulwarks were stove in in many places. As she lifted sullenly to the waves, water poured off her decks. Then, as they came nearer still, they could see that men were slaving at the pumps, fighting for very life to keep their craft afloat.

She was an old-fashioned sailing vessel and not fitted with wireless, so up to the slender pole foremast of the *Radio* four balls of bunting were run, to break out, simultaneously, into flags at a jerk on the hoisting halyard when they were in place. That little arrangement of four flags carried a message of good cheer to the toiling, storm-racked men on the brig. It told them that the *Radio*, though she was but a small yacht, was a British ship and would not desert any sailorman in distress.

Nearer and nearer the *Radio* drew until Joan and Ronald could see the white faces

of the men and could hear their hoarse cheers. Captain Trevallen seized a big speaking trumpet from its beckets on the bridge rail and raised it to his mouth.

"Stand by and I'll send a boat to take you off!" he roared.

And then came an answering roar:

"Couldn't you give me a tow, captain? We can keep her afloat if you can give us a pluck somewhere. She's my own craft, captain, and she's not insured. I'd rather pay you salvage than lose her."

Captain Trevallen looked questioningly at Dr. Bastable and then handed him the speaking trumpet.

"It is for you to say, sir," he declared. "We could try to tow her to the Bermudas, but to my mind we had best take off her crew and have done with it. We mustn't forget this storm that's coming up. Whatever we do must be done in a mighty hurry."

Roger and Joan turned anxious eyes on Dr. Bastable. They wanted him to offer the poor man a tow. It would be a fine thing, of course, to save the crew, and Joan, at least, knew that, with those seas running, even the saving of the crew would demand a deal of pluck. But it would be a finer thing still to save the brig herself. They could learn nothing from the face of the scientist. For a moment or two he appeared to be thinking deeply. Then he raised the trumpet.

"I'll tow you, if I can, and if you like to take the risk," he cried. "But it will be a big risk. I can take you off now; but once the storm breaks there'll be no chance, and the tow rope may break!"

"I'll risk it, sir," came the answer. "And my men are willing! We have a hawser if you'll send a boat."

"Very well, then," said Dr. Bastable, so quietly that it is doubtful if his words reached the plunging, wallowing brig. "We'll try to pluck her through the worst of the storm, captain, and then we must send out a call and try to hand her over to some other more powerful vessel. By the way, tell that fellow that I'm not out for salvage money and that I'll do my part willingly. Tell the crew there's an extra day's pay for each of them so long as we hold on to the tow."

"And I'm not wanting salvage money, either," said Captain Trevallen, and straightway yelled out to the drifting brig the good news that no charge would be made to them for the aid that was coming.

Of course no reward is ever asked, or even expected, for saving life at sea; but saving a vessel is another matter, and the law of the sea gives a substantial proportion of the value of the vessel and her cargo to the officers, crew and owner of a ship that aids another into port. Both the officers and the crew of the *Radio* had a right to expect a substantial reward for the perils they were about to undergo, and so Dr. Bastable felt a warming thrill when he heard his men cheer at the message the captain had thundered across the rioting waste of water. But amidst the cheer he heard a murmur or two, and casting his sharp eyes round saw that the two new hands taken on board at Newquay were scowling and grumbling.

Getting the boat away was a tricky job, and one that called for no little skill and daring; but Ronald could not help envying Baptiste when he saw that the French boy had been given a place at one of the oars. He leaned over the rail and shouted his envy.

"You lucky dog, Baptiste!" he cried. "I'll be even with you for this one day. You are having all the fun."

The brown eyes of the French boy twinkled as he looked up into those of his young friend.

"I have handled—how you say?—zee oar since ever I can remember," he laughed. "Mr. Allen he say I row better as a man. But when I come back you shall—aha—you shall punch me on ze nose. Zat is what you Britishers like, ees it not?"

Before Ronald could make any reply to this amazing proposition the small boat left the side of the *Radio* and started her tremendous journey across the waves that seemed to be getting bigger and bigger and more and more angry with every minute that passed.

From the deck of the yacht they watched her with bated breath. It seemed impossible that she could live amidst those waves. She was a sturdy craft, though, and well manned. Then, too, Tom Allen was at the helm and what he didn't know about boat steering wasn't worth knowing. He directed her cunningly so that, though she seemed often to be in direct peril, she edged ever nearer and nearer to the wallowing brig.

At last the struggling crew rested on the oars under the bows of the brig. A light

line was hurled skilfully, and as skilfully caught. Then the small boat started to fight her way back again, trailing the line behind her. To attempt to bear the weight of the heavy towing hawser would have been madness. The light line was all they could take. If ever they reached the *Radio* again that would be used to haul the strong rope to her, so that the brig could be brought round out of the troughs of the waves and headed for safety.

If the fight to the brig had been desperate what words can describe the return journey? The men were tiring because of their terrific labours, and once it seemed that they could no longer hold their boat on her way.

"Heavens! she's gone!" Dr. Bastable muttered, and Ronald and Joan, staring out at the boat and praying as never they had prayed before, clutched at the rail until their knuckles showed ivory white with the nervous tension of their grip.

But desperate as seemed the situation of the boat Tom Allen knew what he was doing. Whenever there was a chance he gave his men a respite, only to tongue-lash them into further frenzied endeavours when he saw that they must pull or go under.

And then, at last, the *Radio* was reached again. Anxious, willing hands, Joan and Ronald the first amongst them, dashed forward to haul the boat and crew to the safety of the deck.

They had done a tremendous deed, those five men, or four men and a boy, rather. But there was no time for cheering, no time for mutual congratulations. The work was not yet done. The hawser had to be got on board, and that was labour almost as severe as the pulling of the boat, though not so dangerous. Joan and Ronald and young Bob Salters now had a chance to show what they were made of, for those who had manned the boat were in no shape for any further exertions for a while.

"Pully haul! Awayo! Pully haul! Awayo!" cried Captain Trevallen, pulling his whole weight with the rest, and so, hand over hand, the line came aboard until the end of the towing rope flopped on the deck, to be instantly seized and made fast at the stern.

"And that's that!" said the captain, and as he spoke the full fury of the storm burst upon them.

For more than a minute the yacht and her tow were blotted out in a roaring deluge of rain. Captain Trevallen rang down to the engine-room for full power, but they could see nothing, hear nothing, they could only feel that the little yacht was straining her utmost and that the brig lugged and tugged at the rope as though she was some sulky beast that refused to be led in the right direction.

Joan and Ronald were staring out over the stern, trying for a glimpse of the brig, utterly oblivious to the rain that was soaking them through and through. Then heavy hands were laid on their shoulders and the captain's face shone ghastly blue in the flickering lightning. His mouth was opening and shutting, and they could see that he was roaring something at them, but they could hear not a word. He spun them round and pointed to the bridge ladder, signifying that they were to get below.

They made to obey, and then the rain ceased as swiftly as it had come, though the day was still almost as black as night save when the almost incessant lightning flashed and quivered in the blackness overhead.

And then came the wind. Such wind as Ronald had not even dreamed of. It seemed solid, like a sheet of iron pressing against him. He was half-way down the ladder when that fearsome gale struck the yacht and it pinned him against the steps as though a great hand had been thrust against his chest. For one minute, two minutes, he lay there, unable to move. And then, suddenly the wind seemed to lessen. He slid to the deck and turned round to see that Joan, who had lain safe in the shelter of the bridge, was sliding after him. She took his hand when she reached his side and dragged him to the shelter of the cabin companionway.

The peace of the cabin seemed so bewildering that Ronald's head rang with the very absence of the buffeting he had just experienced.

"When the rain's before the wind,
Your tops'l sheets and halliards mind,"

quoted Joan. "My word, Tom Allen's right. We're in for a regular rip-snorter. It'll be a lot worse before it's better, Ronald."

Ronald didn't see, very well, how the storm could be worse than it was, but he was to know before the night was out.

Wearily, hour after hour, the little *Radio* slogged along, pulling at the dead weight of the brig. That they were in the very gravest danger both the youngsters knew, but they would not have known it

from the faces of Captain Trevallen and Tom Allen, when, from time to time, they appeared in the cabin for a bite and a sup.

These two staunch sailormen were as cheerful as though they had been going for a summer cruise round the Isle of Wight. They laughed and cracked jokes; but this did not deceive Joan, and it did not deceive Ronald. They knew that if the brig should suddenly founder, as well she might, the little *Radio* would be pulled under along with her. They knew that at any moment, for their own sakes, they might have to cast off the tow and leave to their fate those who were trusting them. They knew that in the wireless room Dr. Bastable was trying to get into touch with some powerful ship that would come to their aid.

"Come along, let's go and see how dad is getting along," said Joan, about one o'clock in the morning.

They made their way out on to the deck and found that the wind had lessened considerably; but that the waves were tremendous, terrific. They dashed to the wireless cabin and dodged inside, just in time. Even as they closed the door a wave swept the yacht from end to end.

As they entered Dr. Bastable looked up. His face cleared of its anxiety. They could see that he was listening to some good news in the 'phones that clasped his ears.

"Found someone at last," he said. "In touch with the United States cruiser *Sandonah*. Half a moment. I'll just give her our bearings and then she will come as quickly as she can to our rescue. It's touch and go, young 'uns. We ought to have cast loose that brig hours ago; but I can't send all those poor fellows to certain death."

Suddenly he tore the 'phones from his ears and dashed to the door of the cabin. He flung it open and stared out, oblivious of the spray that drenched him from head to foot. Joan and Ronald crowded in the doorway after him.

"No hope! Not a hope! Every signal wiped out!" he cried. "It is the Ray! The Golden Ray again!"

He pointed upwards and, through the murky gloom, they could see the *Radio's* aerial gleaming with the dreaded golden light.

(To be continued)

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CASSELL'S

Fisherman's Luck

By T. C. BRIDGES

TWO small, sturdy boys trudged side by side downhill towards the little river which gleamed in the sunshine in the valley below. Each carried a fishing-rod and had a fishing-bag slung on his back. The rods were old and much mended and spliced; so were the boys' clothes, and especially their boots, which were patched and cobbled all over.

They were half-way down the hill before either spoke. Then Ben, the younger of the two, who was barely nine, broke the silence.

"Barry," he said, "mum's been crying."

"I know that," replied Barry.

"But why was she crying?" insisted Ben.

"It's about that mortgage," said Barry.

"What's a mortgage?"

Barry frowned. "It's a thing that hangs round your neck. That's what dad said."

Ben looked puzzled. "Dad doesn't have anything round his neck," he answered.

"Well, anyhow it's something that worries him," said Barry. "I believe it's really got something to do with the farm, for mum asked him if we should lose Hatherley, and he said it looked like it, if he couldn't pay the money to Mr. Nixon."

"That's that horrid red-faced man who came one day and was so rude to mum," said Ben.

Barry nodded. "He's a pig," he said firmly. "And he's coming again to-day. That's why mum told us to go fishing." He broke off short. "Hulloa! There's someone down on the river, Ben."

"So there is," said Ben, "but he's not on our water. I say, he's got a jolly new rod."

Barry frowned again. "Jolly sight too new! See how the varnish flashes! Enough to scare every trout in the pool. And look at the way he's leaning right over the bank and showing himself. He's an awful duffer."

"Perhaps he doesn't know any better," suggested Ben.

"He can't, or he wouldn't fish like that. He'll never catch anything."

By this time the boys had got quite close to the stranger, who was fishing in the next pool above the fence bounding the Hatherley property. As they came up he turned and saw them.

"Good morning," he said in a cheery voice. "I say, are there any trout here?"

"Plenty," Barry answered.

"Well, I can't catch them," said the stranger, with a laugh which showed nice white teeth. He was rather tall, with a very sunburnt face, and though his tweeds were old and weather stained, Ben liked his looks.

"I think you're showing yourself too much, sir," said Ben politely.

"I expect I am," replied the other, still smiling. "Fact is, I'm a duffer at this sort of thing. I love fishing, but this is the first time I ever tried for trout."

Barry and Ben stared. They couldn't help it. They had both been fishing since they could walk, and the idea of a man who had never before fished for trout was staggering. Especially one like this who had a lovely new rod that must have cost simply pounds, a brand new creel, and the latest in folding landing-nets.

The stranger burst out laughing again, and it was such a jolly laugh that both the boys smiled. "I expect you think I'm a freak," he said, "but one's got to begin some time. Let me watch you a bit."

Ben whispered to Barry, "Shall we ask him on our water, Barry? Dad wouldn't mind."

Barry hesitated. "Yes, I suppose so," he said rather grudgingly; and Ben wasted no time in giving the invitation.

"That's very nice of you," said the stranger as he swung lightly over the stile. "Now don't worry about me. You fish and I'll watch."

The boys moved apart, and began to cast. The stranger followed Ben.

For a small chap Ben fished very well indeed, and after a few casts the water broke as a nice trout rose and seized the fly. Ben struck, and the trout, well hooked,

dashed up the pool. Ben kept a tight line, and in a minute or two drew out on to the shingle a pretty scarlet-spotted fish of about a quarter of a pound.

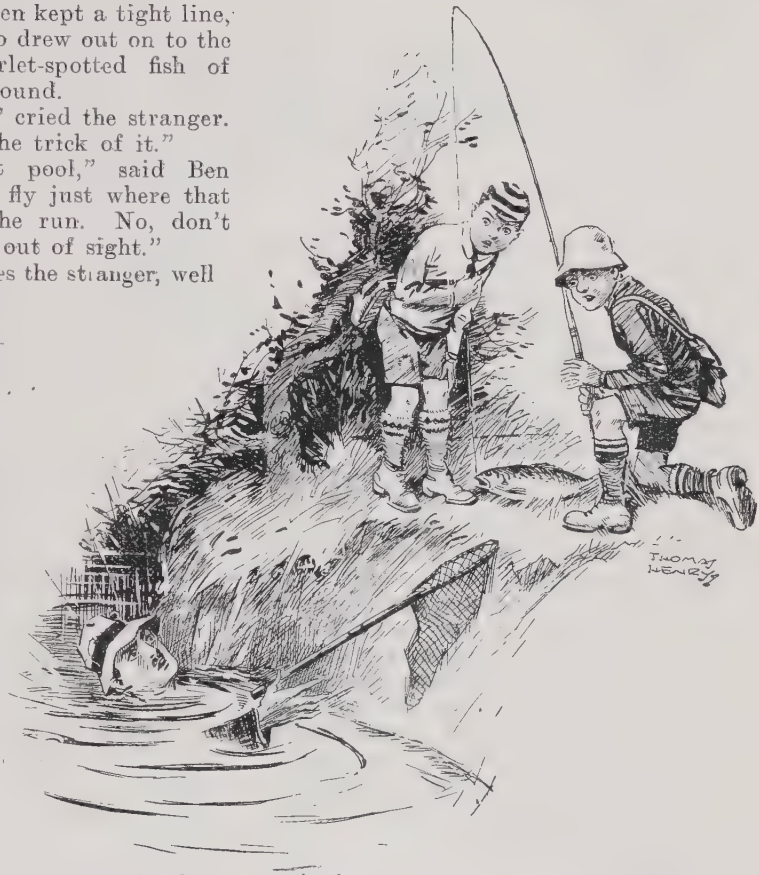
"Capital! Capital!" cried the stranger. "Now I begin to see the trick of it."

"You try the next pool," said Ben politely. "Drop your fly just where that rock sticks up near the run. No, don't stand too close. Keep out of sight."

After one or two tries the stranger, well coached by Ben, managed to cast his fly just on the right spot, and it had not floated a yard before a trout had it. It was more by luck than good management that the stranger hooked it, but he did, and Ben showed him how to play it, and finally netted it out for him. "Jolly nice fish, sir. I think he's half a pound," said Ben.

"And all thanks to you," said the other as he stood admiring the beautifully spotted fish. "I'm really very grateful."

"They're rising well. We'll get lots more," Ben assured him.



"As he spoke there was a loud splash. The bank had given way"

Drawn by Thomas Henry

They did. Within the next hour they had between them fourteen fish, of which the stranger's share was three.

Then they came to a big, black-looking pool. "This is where Cuthbert lives," said Ben.

"Cuthbert?" questioned the stranger.

Ben grinned. "He's a great whopper—a cannibal. Won't take a fly."

"What about a minnow?" asked the other.

"We haven't got one," said Ben.

"But I have. Look here, I'll put one on my line, and you take my rod and have a try."

Ben's eyes gleamed, but he stood back. "No, let Barry try, please. He knows just where Cuthbert lies."

"Jolly decent of you, Ben," muttered Barry as he took the fine new rod and sent the glittering bait whizzing out over the stream. It dropped gently and they saw it dart in life-like manner into the black depths. Next instant the line stopped and began to move up stream. Barry struck. "Got him!" he shrieked as the line went screaming off the reel.

The next five minutes were just one mad excitement. The great trout dashed up the pool, down, across it. He bored down into the darksome depths; he leaped high in air. But Barry held him, and at last the big fish began to tire, and Barry managed to draw him close under the bank. Ben seized the landing-net, but it was an awkward place, and the bank too high and steep for him to reach.

"Let me," said the stranger. Net in hand he dropped cleverly over the edge, and hanging on with one hand, slipped the net smartly under the fish. He tossed it clear, and next moment it was flopping on the grassy bank.

"I say, but he's a topper! A good three pounds!" exclaimed Barry in delight.

As he spoke there was a loud splash. The

bank had given way, and the stranger was up to his neck in the pool.

There was no real danger, and with the help of the boys he was soon back on shore, dripping wet but perfectly cheerful. "By Jove, I'm glad I got him out before I slipped," he said.

"But you're awfully wet," said Ben in dismay.

"My dear boy, what does it matter? We've got Cuthbert," was the answer.

"You'd better come up to the house, sir," said Barry. "I expect dad can find you some dry things."

Mrs. Logan looked decidedly startled and rather upset when she saw her boys bringing in the dripping stranger. "Mum, we've caught Cuthbert," shouted Ben as he came rushing into the room, swinging the huge fish by the tail. "This gentleman helped us, and he fell in, getting him out, and can he have some dry things, please?"

Before anyone else could speak the other door of the big living-room was flung open and in strode Mr. Logan. "It's no use, Mary," he burst out in a tone of despair. "Nixon won't listen to reason. He's going to foreclose at once. I——" His eyes fell upon the stranger and he stopped short. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said curtly.

The stranger looked at him. "Why, Jack, have you forgotten me?" he said.

Mr. Logan stood still for a moment, staring, then suddenly rushed forward stretching out both hands. "Bob—Bob Frant!" he exclaimed. "It can't be!"

"But it is," answered the other, smiling. "And jolly glad to see you again after all these years. Why, I've been trying to find your address ever since I got home. I'd no notion you were here."

Mr. Logan turned to his wife. "Mary, this is my old school friend, Robert Frant. You've often heard me talk of him."

"Indeed I have," said Mrs. Logan. "And so you've been helping my boys to fish?"

"No, they've been helping me. They've given me the best time I've had for years."

Mr. Logan broke in. "But you're soaked. Come and change. Then we'll have some luncheon. I see there are plenty of trout for all of us."

Luncheon was a most cheery meal, for Mr. Logan was so delighted at meeting his old friend that for the moment he seemed to have forgotten his troubles. Afterwards their mother sent Ben and Barry off to do some small jobs outside. When they came in for tea Mr. Frant was still there. He called them up.

"Boys," he said quite gravely, "do you mind if I stay here and fish with you this summer?"

"Rather not," replied both in one breath. "It would be jolly," added Ben.

Mr. Frant turned to their father. "Tell them, Jack," he said.

All the worried lines seemed to have gone from Mr. Logan's face, and his voice when he spoke was surprisingly cheerful. "Mr. Frant has rented the fishing, boys," he said. "And I am glad to tell you that the money he is paying for it is going to help us to keep Hatherley. So I think that you and Cuthbert between you have done dad and mum a very good turn."

"Then you've got rid of that thing that hung round your neck, dad?" asked Ben.

For a moment his father looked puzzled

"The mortgage, he means," explained Barry.

Mr. Logan laughed out loud. "I'm going to," he said. "Indeed I'm going to."

"He certainly is," added Mr. Frant with decision, "and as a small reward for your share in it, boys, I'm going to buy each of you a new rod."

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THE ADVENTURES of BINGO DOG

By CONSTANCE EGAN

NO. 2.—BINGO AND TISHY MAKE NEW FRIENDS

BINGO DOG carried his new-found friend Tishy, the little green lizard, away from the wharf and the river.

The sun was just rising, and the people were not yet astir. Bingo trotted along, up one street and down the next. Presently they came to a grey little street with dingy little shops on either side; outside each shop stood a dustbin waiting for the dustman to collect the rubbish.

Bingo Dog dropped the little green lizard. They would find something to eat around here, he felt sure; they might even find somebody who wanted a dog like him. He looked at the little green thing at his feet.

"You know, old chap," he said thoughtfully, "you *are* rather like my old green shoe."

"The most expensive shoes there are, are made of lizard skin," squeaked Tishy with a slight shudder; "but I'm never going to be made into an old shoe, so there!"

"And I'm never going to a Dogs' Home," added Bingo, remembering the reason he had run away from his master and mistress and Laburnum Cottage. "I'm a runaway, you know," he went on; "my name's Bingo, and I'm out to see the world, and find someone who wants a dog like me. I'm going to make my fortune . . . I'm going to catch the nimblest cat that ever ran up a tree . . . I'm going to . . ." (I regret to say Bingo Dog was boasting. He was showing off before the little green lizard.) Suddenly he broke off. "You're a runaway too, aren't you?" he asked.

"Yeth, motht noble Bingo," lisped Tishy, who never could remember how you pronounce "s" when he was at all nervous or impressed. And just now he was very much impressed with the noble Bingo, with his funny old face and long greyhound tail.

"Most noble Bingo"! Bingo Dog pricked up his ears. He liked that. It's nice to be called "most noble," especially when you're only an overgrown mongrel dog, with a head that doesn't even match your body.

"But you're ever so much *nicer*

than my old slipper," he murmured graciously.

"Don't mention thlipperth," shivered Tishy; "it wath thlipperth made me run away from home."

"Slippers!" echoed Bingo Dog. "How's that? Did they throw one at you?"

"No," answered Tishy, "I was playing with my brothers and sisters one day in the sun" (he had lost his nervousness now and remembered how to pronounce "s"), "when two people came along.

"'Oh! look at those little green lizards,' said one; 'I would like some slippers just like those, to go with my new frock.'

"'If you want lizard-skin shoes, my dear, you shall have them,' said the man. 'I will order the boy to catch as many lizards as you like.' So, as I didn't want to be made into a shoe," went on Tishy, in his funny squeaky little lizard voice, "I ran away and hid in a sack of rice, which was shipped to England."

"Brave fellow," wooffed Bingo, and he gave Tishy a gentle little lick on the nose. This sealed their friendship.

Just then a scraggy black cat came prowling around one of the dustbins.

"Meow," said the black cat, "*mee—oow!*"

"*Grrrrrr!*" growled Bingo Dog and gave chase. He never could resist chasing a cat.

The cat spat at him, arched her back, and then fled down a tiny alley and over a high wall. Bingo followed till he came to the wall. The cat had disappeared, so he stood barking loudly and complainingly, till a window above was flung open and a man's head shot out.

"Can't you stop that row?" yelled the man, and he flung an empty tobacco tin at Bingo. Bingo dodged the tin and ran back to the street, the hair on his back all ruffled with temper.

"The people around here shan't have *me* for a dog so they can go begging," he grumbled to the lizard.

"Then we won't stay here, most noble Bingo," soothed Tishy; "they're not worth troubling about."

"You're right, old fellow," barked Bingo Dog, and somehow the ruffled hair on his back smoothed itself down and his temper vanished.

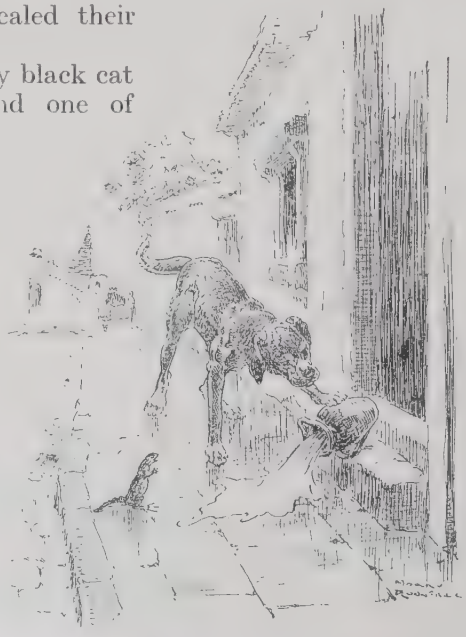
"Better find a bit of brekker, though it is a bit early," he remarked; "I feel a bit peckish. Then we'll get a move on."

"Yes, most noble Bingo," said the lizard, and it crawled along the gutter and found a plum.

Bingo Dog went sniffing around the dustbins and found a big beef bone. He lay on the pavement to enjoy it.

When Tishy had finished the plum and licked the stone quite clean, and Bingo Dog had gnawed the nearly-bare bone *quite* bare, he picked up the little lizard and trotted off.

Through the mean little street they went, to the big streets of the town, and through the big wide, important streets to other little straggly streets, and through these to the outskirts of the town, which was more countrified.



"He just tipped the jug over and the milk streamed out"

Suddenly Tishy gave a wriggle.

"I'm thirsty," he squeaked.

"Then you must have a drink," said Bingo Dog in matter-of-fact tones. Carefully he put the little thing down and looked around.

Now, on the right stood a row of little cottages, and outside each cottage door stood a milk-can or a jug. Bingo Dog looked into one of the jugs. What luck! The milkman had already been on his round.

"Do you like milk?" asked Bingo.

"Yes, I love it," piped Tishy, his beady eyes glistening.

"Like a flash he was streaking back the way they had come"

Bingo Dog looked at the jug of milk again. It was a big jug, and the milk only came about half-way up in it. How was Tishy to get a drink? If he were to lift the lizard on to the edge of the jug it wouldn't be able to reach the milk.

And then Bingo thought of the simplest plan. He just tipped the jug over, and the milk streamed out over the path and into the gutter.

Tishy lapped up as much as he wanted. Bingo lapped up as much as *he* wanted. Then they went on their way, well pleased with the cleverness of Bingo.

I don't know what the cottager said when she found the morning milk all spilled, and certainly Bingo and Tishy never gave her a thought. But I expect she borrowed some from next door, and you mustn't blame Bingo and Tishy too much, because they didn't know any better.

Soon they came to a field, and Bingo said he would like to romp and roll in the grass; and Tishy said he loved green fields, and he longed to hunt for insects. The sun was now well up, and they were both very happy.

Bingo Dog raced around the field, barking joyously; he rolled in the grass, and nosed around the hedges for rabbits.

Bingo always thought he would catch a rabbit, but he never did. He would scratch away the earth from some hole, and dig deeper and deeper, sending the earth flying this way and that, and snuffling and growling and making such a hullabaloo that every bunny within a mile would hear him and lie safely hidden till Bingo Dog tired of "rabbiting."

While Bingo was doing all this, Tishy the little green lizard was darting in and out among the grasses and wild flowers hunting for insects; and when he had eaten just as much as a little green lizard can eat at one meal, he lay and basked in the sun, and soon fell asleep.

Bingo Dog returned from his rabbit hunting, a very pleased but dirty dog. He was earth from nose to tail—you never saw such a sight! And why he was so pleased, when he hadn't seen so much as a bunny whisker, I really don't know.

It was then that he noticed, for the first time, that an old mare stood beneath a tree in one corner of the field, flicking the flies away with her long brown tail.

"I'll go and have a chat," barked Bingo, who was friendly with all animals except cats and rabbits, and he frisked across the field to the old mare.

"Hallo!" he cried; "I'm Bingo,"

Bingo generally opened a conversation this way. "I'm a runaway, you know."

"I didn't know," broke in the mare. "I go in for walking more than running," she continued; "last job I had was ploughing. Now I'm just having a bit of a rest. Farmer's going to sell me, I believe. You're a funny-looking tyke, aren't you?" The mare looked curiously at Bingo. "What *are* you, anyway?" she asked.

Now, that's a very unpleasant question to be asked when you happen to be no sort of a dog but a mongrel.

"I'm a—a Bingo Dog," began Bingo uneasily; "you know, the kind of dog someone's sure to want," he finished lamely enough.

"I think I like Bingo Dogs," said the wise old mare. "You're the first I've ever seen. But I like you, you've got a jolly face." After that Bingo Dog chummed up to the old mare.

They were still chatting when two men came along, the farmer and a bargeowner. After much talking and arguing the farmer sold the mare to the bargeowner.

"Come on, old lady," said the bargeowner as he put a halter on the mare and led her away.

"I say, I can't leave you like this," barked Bingo Dog excitedly. "I haven't nearly finished talking. I'll follow on. Perhaps the Bargee will adopt me. He's sure to want a dog like me."

So he followed the two men and the old mare out of the field.

Right from the very start the Bargee took a fancy to Bingo Dog.

"I bet you're a stray all right," said he, patting Bingo's rough head; "nobody wouldn't own a dog like you. But I likes yer, an' I'm going to keep yer. I always sez mongrels is the best dogs."

Bingo licked his hand. It tasted of tobacco and coal, but he liked it. He had found someone who wanted him.

They came to the canal, and the old mare was duly harnessed. She had become a barge horse.

"This is the sort of quiet job I shall like," she confided to Bingo, who had just had a glorious swim in the canal and was shaking the dripping water out of his coat.

"So we're all going to live happily ever after," laughed Bingo, when suddenly he remembered his little pal Tishy! Like a flash he was streaking back the way they had come. The Bargee whistled and called, but Bingo kept straight on till he reached the field.

There was Tishy, still lying asleep in the sun.

"I'd forgotten you, little pal," said Bingo gruffly, but he licked Tishy's hard little nose very tenderly, and picked him up.

Tishy opened his beady eyes.

"Motht noble Bingo," he lisped, and closed them again.

Bingo ran back to the barge.

They were nearly ready to start when he ran on board, and hastily dropped Tishy, who scuttled away out of sight, to continue his sleep.

"Why, here's a dog!" cried a woman.

"Bless me," said the man, looking round, "if that isn't the tyke I was tellin' you about. The one that follered me from Brown's field. Thought he'd run away agen. Come on, old boy. Good dog!"

Soon after that the barge started on its journey down the canal, with Bingo Dog and Tishy on board, and the old mare walking slowly along the towpath, drawing the barge by a long rope.

(To be continued)

Ovingdean Grange

A Story of Stuart Days

By

Harrison Ainsworth

SINCE the year 1651 but slight change has taken place in the general aspect of the sequestered little village of Ovingdean, situated in a charming dene, or woody valley, amidst the South Downs, and within a mile of the coast.

In the middle of the seventeenth century the Grange was the principal residence of the place —an old red-brick structure with a very striking frontage. In the small village close by was the church, scarce a stone's throw from the Grange, and grey and old even in 1651, for its architecture is Norman. Beside it was the manse, which had served as an abiding-place for many successive pastors.

But alas! in those unhappy and distracted times, the Puritans who had ruled England had dispossessed from his living good Mr. Ardingly Beard, whom they condemned as an obstinate prelatist and malignant (this last was their name for the Cavaliers). The parish was handed over to one Master Increase Micklegift, an Independent minister, who took up his residence in the manse.

Poor Mr. Beard and his pretty daughter Dulcie sought refuge at Ovingdean Grange, where its owner, the Royalist Colonel Wolston Maunsel, willingly gave them shelter. Colonel Maunsel appointed Mr. Beard as his domestic chaplain, and he and Dulcia, who was nineteen, settled down at the Grange, where the lonely Colonel, whose wife was dead, was glad of their company.

Colonel Wolston Maunsel of Ovingdean Grange has been described as a Royalist, but his description of himself, "that he was a Cavalier to the backbone," would be more correct.

He had joined the standard of the king during the Civil War, and for several years served under Prince Rupert, till at Naseby he was wounded severely enough to put an end to his military career and was made prisoner by the Parliamentarians, who inflicted heavy fines upon him before they finally released him.

His wife died during his imprisonment, leaving him their only child, a lad of sixteen. The Royalist party was crushed for the time and did not rally for nearly five years, when Charles the Second was crowned at Scone and entered England at the head of a small army, hoping to recover his kingdom.

Then it was that Clavering Maunsel, now a remarkably handsome young man, set out to join him With his son Colonel Maunsel sent a veteran follower, an ancient king's trooper named John Habergeon, who, though old, was as hard and as strong as iron. Both Clavering and his retainer fought at the disastrous battle of Worcester, when Charles's army was defeated and he himself put to flight and forced to seek hiding from his enemies.

At Ovingdean Grange, when our story opens, the loss of the battle was known, but though a week had elapsed, still no tidings came of Clavering Maunsel or of John Habergeon. Neither had any news arrived concerning the fugitive king. No one at the Grange was more anxious than Dulcia. Her cheeks had lost their bloom, and the lustre of her eyes was so dimmed that Patty Whinchat, her handmaiden, was quite in despair about her.

She was sitting with her father and Colonel Maunsel that evening, when Patty Whinchat, in a state of the greatest excitement and followed by an old serving-man, rushed into the room.

"Oh! your honour, John Habergeon is come back!" cried Patty, wellnigh out of breath.

"Has he come alone?" the colonel faltered.

"No, your honour, no!" Martin Geere, the old serving-man, cried. "John has brought Master Clavering with him, but the young gentleman be in a sorry plight—a woeful, sorry plight, for sure."

"But he lives! he is safe!" the colonel exclaimed, in a transport of delight. "Where is my boy? Bring him to me—bring him to me, quick."

"He is here, your honour," responded the sonorous voice of John Habergeon from the corridor.

In another instant the old trooper appeared, sustaining his young master with his stalwart arm. Clavering Maunsel was in a sorry plight, bloodstained and unkempt, and his right arm appeared to be broken, for it was bound up.

"My boy—my dear boy! How I joy to see thee back again!" the old colonel exclaimed, embracing him. "I had wellnigh given thee up for lost."

"John Habergeon saved my life," replied Clavering, and while he and the old trooper were refreshed with food, he told a stirring story of their adventures since Worcester fight. He also related how he had been the means of saving Charles's life at the battle, and that the king was still wandering about the country till he could find a ship to take him back safely to France.

"Thou art a true Maunsel, every inch of thee, Clavering," his father cried in approval.

"I crave your honour's leave to propose a toast," John Habergeon said, rising. "A health to King Charles, and may God preserve him from his enemies!"

All arose and the toast was drunk by the whole company.

While the party was thus occupied, none of them were aware that their proceedings were watched from the bay-window on the left by a sallow-faced, sinister-looking personage, habited in a Geneva cloak and bands, and wearing a tall steeple-crowned hat on his head. We have said that this spy was unobserved by all the party; but his presence did not pass unnoticed by the quick eyes of Patty Whinchat, who entered the hall just as the treasonable toast (for such it would sound in the ears of a Republican) had been drunk.

"Mercy on us!" Patty screamed. "There's a man at the window. A hatchet-faced man with cat's eyes and a tall sugar-loaf hat and Geneva cloak."

"Oons! that should be Increase Micklegift, wench," the colonel interrupted. He gave orders for the garden to be searched for the intruder, but he could not be found.

The incident caused Colonel Maunsel considerable uneasiness, for Clavering, he well knew, might at any moment be arrested as a traitor to the Commonwealth for having borne arms for his lawful sovereign. Though the colonel could rely upon his household to maintain perfect secrecy as to their young master's return, yet if Increase Micklegift had become aware of the fact, Colonel Maunsel felt that he would not hesitate to denounce Clavering. He saw his son conducted to his chamber for the night with a foreboding heart.

A CHIMNEY NOT MEANT ENTIRELY FOR SMOKE

Domiciliary visits to the residences of country gentlemen noted for their fidelity to the Crown were so frequent at the period, that almost every house belonging to a Royalist was provided with a hiding-place, wherein a kinsman, whose proceedings had jeopardized his safety, or a fugitive Cavalier, might be secreted until the danger should have passed by.

Ovingdean Grange possessed a retreat of this kind, very skilfully fabricated amidst the brickwork of a large external chimney at the north-east angle of the mansion. No indication of the hiding-place was perceptible from without, even on careful examination. The lurking place, as may be supposed, was extremely small, and would just hold two persons. Access to the spot was of course obtained from within, from the colonel's own bedchamber, where the left jamb of a large oak chimney-piece turned on a pivot, worked by a concealed spring, and led to a passage. At the end of this another spring gave access to the secret room.

This hiding-place naturally occurred to Colonel Maunsel when he thought about his son's safety. But he was reluctant to put the young man, in his wounded state, into so small and uncomfortable a place. He decided that the best thing to be done was to bring Clavering to his own room, so that, if need be, he could take instant refuge in the hiding-place.

Early next morning he and John Habergeon hatched a plot to deceive the Independent minister.

John rode forth very early, taking with him Martin Geere, disguised in one of Clavering's hats and cloaks. They took care, as they passed, to shout out a farewell to Increase Micklegift at the manse, thus giving him (they hoped) the impression that Clavering had left the Grange. In reality, they soon returned, unperceived, over the downs, and meanwhile Clavering moved into his father's bedchamber, to which none of the servants not in the secret were admitted.

"It vexes me to think that I cannot send for a surgeon to attend upon my son," the colonel said, when John and Martin had returned in safety. "But I dare not trust any, and the coming of one would excite suspicion."

"No need to send for one, your honour," the old trooper replied. "The captain's wounds are in a fair way of healing, and his broken bones have already begun to knit together. He only wants rest and good nursing to set him up again, and he is sure of the latter, with me and gentle Mistress Dulcia to attend upon him."

"Dulcia!" the colonel exclaimed, looking at him fixedly. "She shall not nurse my son." Though he was fond of the parson's pretty daughter, he was far too proud to think her a worthy match for the heir of the Maunsels, and resolved to keep the two young people as far as possible apart.

Meanwhile Dulcia had other matters to worry her. After breakfast that morning Patty Whinchat ran to her suddenly.

"Oh! I've seen him!" gasped the handmaiden, who looked pale and terrified.

"Seen whom?" Dulcia exclaimed, thinking naturally of Clavering.

"Why, Increase Micklegift, to be sure, madam. I happened to be in the corridor just now, when he came up to me—how he got there I can't tell!—and seizing me rudely by the arm, uttered these words in my ear: 'Bid thy young mistress come to me without delay. I would speak to her on a matter which concerns her nearly. I will tarry for her during the space of one hour, within the churchyard. If she comes not within that time, she will ever hereafter rue her negligence. Convey my message to her at once.' And with this he disappeared. You won't go, of course, madam?"

"Yes, I will, Patty," Dulcia replied, after a moment's reflection. "I have no fear of him. I will go at once, and you shall attend me. It may be important to others to ascertain his purpose. Give me my hood, child."

The dark figure of the Independent divine was waiting in the churchyard. Increase

Micklegift had large and harsh features, and restless dark eyes which contrasted with his pale complexion. His age was about thirty. Bidding Patty tarry by the gate out of earshot, he led Dulcia to the church porch. Meanwhile Patty noticed a man who crept round the tower to overhear the conversation. It was John Habergeon.

"Hearken to me, maiden," said Micklegift. "My heart yearns towards thee. For long my love for thee has tormented me like a fire. I will be thy slave if thou wilt but love me."

"I will hear no more," Dulcia said, turning to depart.

"You shall hear me out," Micklegift cried, changing his tone to one of menace. "Another has possession of your heart; but he shall not be an obstacle in my path. I know that the malignant Clavering Maunsel is concealed at the Grange. I will denounce him if you will not hear me. Another word from me will consign your father to a prison where he may rot unheeded."

Dulcia was terrified by his looks and words.

"Give me till to-morrow for consideration," she entreated.

Micklegift consented to this, when she had promised she would give no warning nor speak to anyone of the meeting before then.

"I am bound by no promise, villain," muttered John Habergeon, who had heard all that had passed, "and I will take means to defeat thy black design."

THE COMING OF THE ROUNDHEADS

When Dulcia returned to the Grange, she found that she was wanted. That morning Colonel Maunsel had received a Parliamentarian letter informing him that he was to pay another fine for the crime of having Royalist sympathies. It was necessary for him to ride into Lewes to borrow this money from a moneylender there, and he determined to avoid any suspicion by making it apparently a hawking expedition. Dulcia should ride with him, he decided, to keep her out of Clavering's company.

The party soon set forth, with Eustace Saxby, the falconer, and his son Ninian in attendance, with the hawks on their gloved fists. They had scarcely issued from the gate, however, when they came to a sudden halt.

On gaining the road, it was noticed for the first time by all, that a board had been hung against the trunk of a large tree which grew by the gate. On this board was pasted a Proclamation, from the Council of State, for the Discovery and Apprehension of Charles Stuart, his Adherents and Abettors. A Reward of £1,000 was offered to whomsoever should apprehend the said Charles Stuart: while penalties of High Treason were menaced against all who should harbour him, or aid him to escape. Proportionate rewards were offered for the apprehension of Charles Stuart's adherents, with penalties of fine and imprisonment for concealing them, or lending them assistance. Strict commands were given, in conclusion, to all officers of Port Towns, and others in authority, to permit no person to pass beyond Sea without special licence.

This notice did nothing to ease the colonel's mind. He rode on in gloomy silence up a steep road cut in the chalk, which soon led the little cavalcade to the downs behind the Grange. Proceeding in this way at an easy pace, the colonel reached the summit of Kingston Hill, where a magnificent view burst upon him. Almost at his feet, it seemed—though really several miles away—lay the ancient town of Lewes.

A moment later he saw another sight which pleased him less than the sunny, open country. Along the road leading from the village of Kingston a small body of troopers was advancing in his direction. The little band numbered twenty men and an officer, and the colonel knew that they must be Roundheads.

Captain Stelfax, the red-bearded leader, saw the party almost as soon as they saw him, and immediately sent one Sergeant Delves to fetch them. Knowing that refusal was impossible, the old colonel approached the troop, and haughtily demanded why he had been summoned.

Without changing his position, or making him any reply, the captain of the Ironsides regarded him insolently, and then, casting his eye upon Dulcia, appeared much struck with her charms.

"Perchance, maiden," he said, "you have heard of Hezron Stelfax, captain of the Lord-General's chosen troop of Ironsides? I am he."

"I have heard that your whole troop are cruel and bloodthirsty," she replied, "and that you are the cruellest among them."

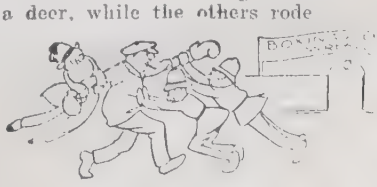
"Ho, ho!" Stelfax laughed. "Cavaliers' tales, believe me. I am cruel only to my foes—bloodthirsty only in the field, like every soldier." He then turned to the colonel. "I do not desire to give you needless pain, colonel, but your son was amongst the slain at Worcester."

Colonel Maunsel knew only too thankfully that this was a false report. But he saw how it might help Clavering not to contradict it, and pretended to be overwhelmed by the news.

"It is part of my duty," Stelfax continued, "to make a strict inquisition of Ovingdean Grange to see if any fugitive malignants are concealed there. You will find me there on your return. And now, my men, forward!" So saying, he departed with his troop.

Colonel Maunsel waited in silence and great anxiety till they were out of sight. He then turned to the younger Saxby, who was fleet-footed, and bade him reach the Grange before the redcoats, tell John Habergeon of the intended visit, and warn all the household that the Roundheads believed Clavering slain at Worcester.

In a moment Ninian was off with the lightness and swiftness of a deer, while the others rode on towards Lewes. Here Colonel Maunsel bor-



rowed the money he needed from a usurer named Zachary Trangmar, and while there was surprised to encounter Lord Wilmot, a well-known Royalist, who had come there for the same purpose. Signs like those of freemasonry passed between the nobleman and Colonel Maunsel, from which the latter understood for what purpose the money was wanted—to get the king safely out of England.

THE SEARCH BY THE IRONSIDES

If Ninian had been mounted upon a swift steed he could not have reached the Grange more quickly than he contrived to do by the use of his own active limbs. The young falconer's first business on entering the house was to seek out John Habergeon, to whom he instantly delivered the colonel's message.

John bade Ninian keep out of sight, lest the Ironsides on their arrival should recognize him and know that the household had been warned. He then hurried upstairs to the colonel's bedchamber, and told Clavering he must take instant refuge within the hiding-place.

Upon this, Clavering passed through the aperture, and the next moment the pillar was returned to its place.

It was time. Scarcely had Clavering made good his retreat, when the blast of a trumpet was heard outside the house, proclaiming the arrival of the Ironsides.

Giving the word to his men to dismount, Stelfax directed that every outlet from the house should be watched. Delves was instructed to take the horses to the stables, see them foddered, and then rejoin his leader.

Stelfax then questioned John Habergeon, and ordered him to consider himself and all in the house as prisoners for the moment. At this juncture, Mr. Beard and Increase Micklegift (who had seen the troopers arrive and come to watch their proceedings) entered the room

"You have been told, I doubt not, of the death of your patron's son," said Stelfax to Mr. Beard.

"What is this I hear?" Micklegift exclaimed, in surprise.

"The young man was slain at Worcester," Stelfax remarked.

"That cannot be!" the Independent minister cried.

"Wherefore can it not be, I prithee?" Stelfax retorted.

He turned to Mr. Beard and added praises of Dulcia, adding that she deserved to be given to a valiant soldier in marriage.

"This man is my rival," Micklegift mentally ejaculated, his pale features flushing angrily. "I must thwart his designs."

A great disturbance was heard in the corridor, and two troopers dragged in Ninian Saxby.

"He hath assaulted our comrade, Helpless Henly, and smitten him on the head with a bill-staff," they explained to Stelfax.

"I was the unlucky cause of it," sobbed Patty, who had followed behind in tears. "The soldier wanted to kiss me against my will, and Ninian came to my assistance."

By this time Stelfax had recognized Ninian as having been with the colonel's party on the downs.

"There must have been a strong motive for his quick return. I will soon find it out," muttered the Ironside captain. He called old Martin Geere and gave orders: "Go fetch thy keys, quickly, thou Pharaoh's butler. I will have every room and every secret place opened unto me."

Stelfax had the whole Grange searched from cellars to garrets. The men made free with the wines found in the former place, carrying off many bottles for their own enjoyment.

Colonel Maunsel's chamber was reserved to the last. On entering the room Stelfax uttered an exclamation which filled John Habergeon with misgiving.

"Bring hither hammer, hatchet, lever, chisel and auger. I have work for you to do."

Anxious looks were exchanged by the Royalists, who now gave up Clavering for lost. These glances did not escape Stelfax, who smiled to himself.

"If we could only get him out of the room for one minute, before the others return, Captain Clavering might be saved," John Habergeon whispered.

"I may help you in this extremity," said Micklegift, in a low tone to John. "You will not forget the service?"

"Never," John returned emphatically, "never! But what you do must be done quickly."

Micklegift instantly approached the Roundhead leader.

"Methinks you did not sufficiently examine yon further closet, captain," Micklegift observed. "In my opinion it hath a false back."

"You must have quicker eyes than I have, to have made that discovery, Master Preacher," Stelfax cried, falling at once into the snare. "However, I will go see."

"I will show you what I mean," said the Independent divine, preceding him to the closet.

As he entered the inner room with Stelfax, a slight movement of his black head signalled to Ninian, who stole swiftly and noiselessly towards the inner door. He had clapped it to suddenly and locked it, almost before Captain Stelfax could turn round.

Infuriated at the successful trick played upon him, the Roundhead leader dashed himself with all his force against the door; but it was of solid oak, and resisted his efforts. He then roared out to the Royalists to set him instantly free, threatening them with his direst vengeance if they refused.

Meanwhile John Habergeon had not been idle. He rushed to the mantelpiece, touched the secret spring, and called to Clavering to come forth at once. Clavering did so, and in a few words the old trooper explained to him what had occurred.

What was to be done next? Escape from the

house was impossible, since every exit was guarded.

Ninian solved the difficulty for the moment. "This is the only door unguarded," he said, leading Clavering to the door opening on to the corridor. "Come with me, and we'll get out of the house in spite of them."

The two young men and John Habergeon instantly went forth. All this time Stelfax continued battering at the closet door, and ere long was released by Sergeant Delves and the two troopers, who now returned with implements for breaking down the mantelpiece.

Thus liberated, the Roundhead captain strode forth, sword in hand, and foaming with rage, followed by Micklegift, who maintained the most perfect composure.

"'Tis as I expected!" Stelfax cried, looking around, and seeing only Mr. Beard; "the treacherous rogues have fled. But they shall not escape me. They cannot have quitted the house. Get thee downstairs quickly, Delves, and give the alarm to thy comrades. If anyone attempts to escape, let him be shot down. Bring up half a dozen men with you. We will search the house from top to bottom, but we will find them. Someone must have been concealed within this chamber—perchance the Young Man, Charles Stuart, himself."

Stelfax demanded of Mr. Beard who the fugitive was, and when the clergyman made no reply he threatened him with torture; but here Micklegift interposed and said firmly that he would not permit such a thing.

"Thrust this man from the room!" cried Stelfax fiercely to the troopers; but at that moment the door opened and Colonel Maunsel and Dulcia entered the room. The old Cavalier looked as pale as death and greatly agitated.

Their entrance operated as a check upon the threatened violence.

"The valiant captain seems to suspect that a proscribed malignant has been concealed within this room," Micklegift said, with a significant look at Colonel Maunsel.

"I am certain of it," the Roundhead leader returned. "Colonel, I must see the hiding-place within yon chimney. Will you show me the entrance to it, or must my men break down the mantelpiece?"

Colonel Maunsel saw that he must give in. He touched the secret spring and the pillar flew back. Stelfax walked in and saw that the bird had flown.

"But the nest is yet warm," he said. "He cannot be far off." He then ordered that all those in the room should be kept prisoners within it until further orders. Then he and Delves went downstairs.

"Your son owes his safety to me," Micklegift remarked to Colonel Maunsel, who thanked him, but added: "Little has yet been gained, for he will never be able to get clear of the house. Hist," he went on, "did you not hear a noise?"

"Methinks the sound comes from the chimney!" Micklegift cried.

It did. For the next instant legs appeared, and Ninian dropped lightly on the hearth, followed by Clavering and John Habergeon.

"We got upon the roof," Clavering explained, "and so reached this chimney, where we meant to lurk till the search was over, when Ninian heard my father's voice—so here we are."

All began to talk excitedly of what the fugitives should do next, for the Ironsides might return at any moment. It was Micklegift, wishing to please Dulcia, who suggested that the secret room, having been just visited, was not likely to be searched again. All agreeing to this, except Dulcia, who cried out that the divine would betray Clavering, the trio entered and were just concealed before a sentry opened the door suspiciously and looked in.

More than an hour passed before Stelfax finished his second search and returned. He was in no good temper, and announced that in place of the three missing men he should take the colonel, Mr. Beard and Dulcia as prisoners to Lewes, if they would not deliver up the fugitives.

To do so never entered their heads. Imprisonment was far preferable. Micklegift, infuriated at the idea that Dulcia should be in the power of his rival, protested so loudly that this time he really was seized and thrust forth very roughly from the house.

STELFAX'S RUSE

To the horror of Colonel Maunsel, Stelfax took possession of the room giving access to the hiding-place, and ordered a large fire to be lit in the hearth. Some time later, after he had been the round of his sentries, a plan to force the truth concerning the fugitives occurred to him, and he sent for his three prisoners.

"If you do not reveal the secret to me, I shall put you all to the torture!" he said loudly.

They all firmly refused.

"Sergeant Delves," continued Stelfax, in an inflexible tone, "take these two gentlemen away and let both undergo the torture of the boot till one confesses. Begin with Colonel Maunsel."

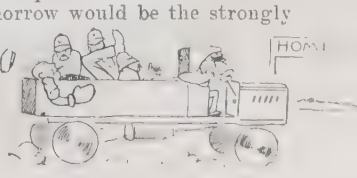
It was in vain that Dulcia implored him on her knees to spare them.

"Away with them and spare them not!" cried Stelfax.

Overcome by terror, the distracted damsel uttered a scream which rang through the room. Scarcely had it ceased, when the pillar flew back and the fugitives stepped forth, unable to bear the threat of violence to their friends.

"Ho, ho!" Stelfax exclaimed exultingly. "Here are the men I want."

He was disappointed to discover that Clavering was not the king, but in himself the young man was an important capture. Stelfax decided that the safest place of confinement for the trio until the morrow would be the strongly built church tower, and ordered them to be conveyed thither



As this was being done, two horsemen at full gallop dashed up to the Grange. They hurriedly drew rein when they perceived the soldiers, and would have dashed off again, but one was promptly captured by the Roundheads, the other getting clear away.

The prisoner proved to be Lord Wilmot, and Stelfax immediately decided that his escaped comrade was the king. With half his men he instantly galloped off in pursuit, leaving Delves in charge of the prisoners. In the confusion Ninian escaped, but the others were soon confined in the tower, while the soldiers, with plenty of wine to beguile their watch, mounted guard in the church itself.

The servants at the Grange who had packed their supper baskets had taken care to fill them with thirst-provoking viands, and the men in consequence drank long and deep. After a while their potations began to tell, and half of them dropped asleep, to the great rage of Delves, who was the only person left capable of offering proper resistance. The prisoners heard the carousal and began to see possibilities of escape. John Habergeon told his companions to hold themselves ready.

Presently Sergeant Delves heard a slight noise near by and beheld Increase Micklegift, who was very wrath that his church should be used as a guard-room. Delves called upon him to depart, but he refused to do so, and when the trooper started up to seize him he clapped his hands together, and called out with a loud voice: "Arise! It is time!"

At the signal Ninian and his father suddenly sprang from the shadows, and threw themselves on the carabines which the soldiers had stacked against the wall. At the same moment the prisoners took the opportunity to burst forth from the tower, and soon overpowered the drunken and drowsy soldiers. The Royalists only numbered five, but as they had obtained possession of all the fire-arms they were completely masters of the situation. The soldiers still capable of raising an alarm were bound hand and foot and gagged, and their outer garments donned by the Royalists. Thus attired, they had little difficulty in making their way to the stables of Ovingdean Grange, and leading forth horses without arousing any suspicion.

But just at that moment an alarming sound reached their ears.

The bell of the church began to toll. In another moment all was activity within the Grange, and the soldiers left on guard there rushed out.

In the meantime Stelfax, after a long chase, had captured the fugitive Royalist, who was not the king, but a devoted adherent of his named Colonel Gunter, and had returned with him to the Grange. On hearing the bell toll he hastened to the church, and to his astonishment and fury discovered the state of affairs there.

Delves and his men were soon released, and all hastened back to the Grange. But during his absence the Royalist party, hearing from the servants of the capture of Colonel Gunter, had made a dash for the house and rescued the prisoner. Hardly was this accomplished, when Stelfax reappeared on the scene.

On beholding the foe, Lord Wilmot drew his sword, and calling upon his companions to follow him, charged the Roundheads, resolved to hew them down. But the Ironside leader did not care to abide the attack. His own pistols and the carabines of his men had been discharged, and time had not been allowed them to reload. He therefore gave the word to retreat into the garden, and the command was promptly obeyed. Satisfied with this success, and not caring to continue the struggle, the Royalists contented themselves with a loud triumphant shout that made the holt ring again, and rode off.

Though for the next few days Stelfax scoured the country for his escaped prisoners, and once or twice actually entered inns in which they lay hid, he failed to recapture them, for they knew the country well, and disguised now as shepherds, now as Roundheads, contrived to elude him at all points, and at the same time to keep in touch with Colonel Maunsel at the Grange by means of Ninian, who acted as messenger.

Lord Wilmot and Colonel Gunter's one object was to ensure the escape to France of the king, who was hiding first at one Sussex mansion and then at another, always in danger of his life. They secretly arranged that he should sail early on a certain morning on a vessel called the *Swiftsure*, whose owner, Captain Nicholas Tattersall, was a Royalist at heart. But it was necessary to conceal the king overnight, and for this purpose Ovingdean Grange, which was not far from Shoreham Harbour, where the *Swiftsure* lay, was chosen. Stelfax had now withdrawn to Lewes, but the enterprise remained one of great danger.

The king, who took all his perils with the light-heartedness that was characteristic of the Cavaliers, was greeted at the door of the Grange by the old colonel, with all his servants behind him in their best liveries. They little knew that their approach had been seen by Increase Micklegift and Captain Stelfax, with whom the Independent minister was now in league.

"But he is come before his time," exclaimed Stelfax; and it was true that the king had done so, fearing danger. "And he finds me wholly unprepared, for all my men are at Lewes. Alas, it is Charles Stuart himself this time, and I shall lose him!"

"There is yet a means of accomplishing his capture, if thou darest attempt it, single-handed," replied Micklegift.

"What is there I dare not do?" rejoined Stelfax. "Show me thy plan."

"It is this," answered Micklegift. "I will introduce thee secretly to the house—into the sleeping-chamber of the old Amalekite. We shall not be noticed, for all the household will be occupied with the arrival of this company. Peradventure thou mayst be able to seize the Young Man."

"I will seize him, or slay him, and take my chance for the rest," rejoined Stelfax, in a determined voice.

On this they quitted the cottage together, and taking a few steps up the hill, reached a door in the wall, which Micklegift unlocked. They then went into the garden.

In the meantime, at the Grange, Charles had presented to him Mr. Beard and his daughter. He had heard from Clavering that the colonel opposed his match with Dulcia, and had gaily promised the young man that he would gain his father's consent. This he instantly proceeded to do, and naturally the colonel could not refuse the request thus made by his king. He promised that he would object no longer to the wedding of Clavering and Dulcia.

The king was ushered into the colonel's sleeping chamber as the best in the house, and left alone there to change his linen after his long ride. He was adjusting his laced band before a mirror, when the arras curtain was suddenly drawn aside and two men, whose appearance and looks left him in no doubt of their intentions, stepped from behind it.

They were, of course, Stelfax and Micklegift. The Ironside leader's first act was to possess himself of the pistols and rapier, which the king had incautiously laid upon the table, and deliver them to his companion.

"What makes you here?" Charles sternly demanded.

"I am here to arrest thee, Charles Stuart, in the name of the Parliament of England, and by order of his Excellency the Lord-General Cromwell. Surrender thyself my prisoner—rescue or no rescue—or I will shoot thee through the head."

"Off, villains!" exclaimed the king, retreating a few paces. "Touch me at your peril. I will resist to the death."

"I ask thee again," retorted Stelfax, "dost thou yield thyself a prisoner?"

Charles seemed to have taken a sudden resolution.

"Since it cannot be helped, I yield," he said.

Stelfax directed Micklegift to open the door of the hiding-place, and the other did so.

"Enter that hiding-place, Charles Stuart," said Stelfax sternly to the king. "I am thy master now, by right of the sword," he added, presenting his rapier point at the king's breast. "Enter, I command thee!"

Resistance was hopeless, and Charles was forced to obey.

Stelfax quickly followed, but, ere he passed quite through the aperture, he called out to Micklegift:

"Send they friend Morefruit Stone at once to Lewes for my men. Then return here, and if nought has happened in the interval, tap thrice for a signal, and I will come forth with my prisoner."

So saying, he closed the door of the hiding-place.

Micklegift then passed through a small door, partially concealed by arras, through which he and Stelfax had obtained admittance. This communicated with a back staircase, which the Independent minister hastily descended. At the foot of the staircase was a postern, which let him out into the garden.

Not many minutes later the king's disappearance was discovered by Clavering. In vain he searched both house and garden. Not fifty yards off stood Morefruit Stone's cottage, and great was his surprise on entering it, to find Increase Micklegift in the hands of John Habergeon and Ninian. Temperance Stone, Morefruit's daughter, had overheard the plans made by Stelfax and the minister, and had run to tell Ninian, with whom she was in love.

Clavering drew his sword and, placing its point at Micklegift's throat, demanded in a terrible voice:

"What hast thou done with him? Where is he?"

"Harm me and thou shalt never learn," replied the Independent minister composedly.

"He hath a master-key to the little door," said Temperance.

"But where is Stelfax?" exclaimed Clavering. "Where is——"

"The young man Charles Stuart, thou wouldst say," replied Micklegift. "Thou wilt not find them till it be too late."

"Your honour," said John Habergeon quickly. "Depend upon it both are shut up in the hiding-place."

"Hold yet a moment, and listen to me," said Micklegift. "I will not deny that you have hit upon the truth, for it is vain to attempt further concealment. But ye cannot liberate Charles Stuart without my aid. Stelfax will slay his prisoner rather than yield him to you. Such I know to be his purpose, and ye are acquainted with his determined character. Promise to do me no injury, and I will avert this direful catastrophe, which will otherwise inevitably ensue."

Clavering reflected for a moment, and then replied:

"I give thee the promise thou requirest. Bring him along."

Meanwhile, a prisoner in a narrow cell, with an inexorable gaoler close beside him, Charles did not lose his confidence. Deliverance he felt sure would come when his absence was discovered. So, leaning against the wall of the cell, he assumed a perfectly indifferent air, and to the great annoyance of Stelfax, began to hum French ditties. In this manner nearly half an hour passed away, and Charles asked, with some impatience, how long he was to be kept there. Stelfax made no reply, but the next moment the attention of both was caught by a slight sound—a tap against the piece of wood screening the entrance to the recess.

The tap was repeated; and again for the third time. There could be no doubt now. It was Micklegift.

Sternly enjoining the king to follow him, Stelfax moved forward.

At this moment the secret spring was touched, the door of the recess flew open, and the voice

of the Independent minister was heard to call out: "It is I, Increase Micklegift. Come forth without fear."

Addressing another stern injunction to the king to follow him, Stelfax drew a pistol from his belt, and grasping his bared sword in his left hand, to be ready for instant service if required, stepped out into the room, only to catch sight of two men lurking within the angle of the chimney-piece, ready to spring upon him

"Ah! treacherous dog, thou hast played me false!" he vociferated. "But thou shalt not escape punishment!" With which words he fired his pistol at the Independent minister, and with fatal effect. Micklegift uttered a cry, staggered, and fell dead. "Neither shalt thou escape!" he continued, turning to attack the king, who at this moment appeared at the entrance of the recess; but ere he could execute his purpose, or indeed turn completely round, John Habergeon had thrown himself upon him, and, aided by Ninian, succeeded in disarming him.

But there were others, as it presently appeared, who were equally anxious to express their feelings of satisfaction. The arras curtain was drawn aside, and from the inner room issued a number of persons, who had been anxiously awaiting the result of Micklegift's device, which, though successful as far as the king's safety was concerned, had proved disastrous to himself. No one, however, troubled himself about the luckless Independent minister for the moment. He was left to lie where he had fallen. All the attention was directed towards the king. The party now flocking towards him, which consisted of Colonel Maunsel, Lord Wilmot, Colonel Gunter, with Mr. Beard and his daughter, together with old Martin Geere, were eager in their expressions of joy. Completely carried away by enthusiasm, they made the roof echo with their loyal shouts of "God save King Charles!"

But another matter now claimed the king's attention. One of his enemies was gone to his account, but Stelfax remained. Disarmed, with his arms tightly pinioned to his sides, the Ironside captain was dragged before the king for judgment.

"What hast thou to say, fellow," asked Charles, "why I should not order thee to instant execution?"

"Nothing," replied Stelfax resolutely. "I am prepared to die."

Dulcia stepped forward and threw herself at the king's feet. "Beseech your Majesty," she said, in most earnest entreaty, "cut not off the man's life thus suddenly. Give him time for repentance."

"Oddsfish!" exclaimed the good-natured monarch, "the knave seems to have some better qualities than might be expected if you intercede for him, fair mistress. It shall never be said that Charles Stuart was wanting in magnanimity. I forgive the fellow his attempt upon my life. Set him free."

"Set free!" exclaimed Stelfax, in surprise.

"Aye, but not till it can be done with safety," said the king. "Of that Colonel Maunsel will judge."

Stelfax was so overwhelmed with joy and gratitude that he cried: "Henceforth your Majesty will have no enemy in me. My lips shall be sealed to all I have seen and heard this day, and Colonel Maunsel shall not be called to account for sheltering his proscribed sovereign."

THE GOOD SHIP *SWIFTSURE*

After this peril it was judged wise that the king should remain no longer at Ovingdean Grange, but should proceed immediately to Shoreham to the *Swiftsure*, Ninian going ahead with all speed to bid Tattersall sail that evening instead of the following morning.

The king accordingly said farewell to Colonel Maunsel and his son, thanking them for their loyalty, and wishing the young man all happiness with Dulcia. Then he and Lord Wilmot rode to Brighthelmstone (as Brighton, then a small fishing village, was called), where, at a tavern friendly to the Cavalier cause, they changed into seamen's clothes, and went on foot to Shoreham to join the vessel as members of her crew, to all appearance.

The *Swiftsure* was about a quarter of a mile out to sea. At the water's edge Captain Tattersall met them with a boat, and they were soon rowed out to the vessel. The brig then stood out to sea, and Charles was safely landed on the following morning at Fécamp in Normandy. Not until nine years later did he return in triumph to assume the crown.

The king's recommendation was not neglected. Ere the year was out Clavering was made happy with the hand of the fair Dulcia, and had no reason to repent his choice. The pair continued to reside at Ovingdean Grange to the close of their days.

Stelfax, at that time a colonel in the Guards, and in high favour with Monk, formed part of the royal escort from Blackheath, on the glorious 29th of May, 1660, when the king made his triumphal entry into London. Charles particularly distinguished him, and good-humouredly observed: "Have you forgotten the half-hour we spent together in the hiding-place at Ovingdean, colonel?"

"I have forgotten all, except your Majesty's generosity," replied Stelfax, bending to the saddle-bow.

In the Hands of the Red Men

By E. VAUGHAN-SMITH

"MOTHER, dear Madam Mother! Do let me go a-fishing with Reub!"

"Hast done thy spinning, Mercy?"

"Yes, mother."

"Well, well! Thou hast been a good maid over thy spinning for the past two weeks, so I'll let thee go. But take heed thou dost not fall into the river—and Reuben, go nowhere near the rapids."

"Have no fear, mother. We'd catch no fish at the rapids."

"That's true. See here are two portions of pumpkin pie, and these two goodly apples to eat for your dinner, and here is a little flask of raspberry cordial."

"Oh, thank you, mother!"

A minute later Reuben and Mercy emerged from the long, low, log house in which they lived, and tripped out into the village of New Salem. To our eyes it would not have seemed much of a village. In point of fact it was just a clearing in an American pine forest, consisting of about a dozen log buildings, one of which served the double purpose of a Meeting House on Sundays and a school during the winter months. (There was no school during the summer, as the children's help was too much needed during the busy part of the year, in those strenuous pioneer days.) Enclosing the houses was a wooden palisade, very necessary in earlier years for the protection of the village against the attacks of Red Indians. For years now there had been no trouble of that kind, however, and all day long the gate in the palisade stood open, only being closed when darkness fell.

Reuben and Mercy were through the palisade by now, and out among the giant pines and maples—the latter gorgeous in their early autumn dress of orange, gold and flame colour mingled. Through the leaves there showed here and there the deep, brilliant blue of the New World sky.

Mercy sniffed delightedly. The wholesome, fragrant smell of the pine forest always seemed to come as a fresh pleasure to her. "I *am* glad mother let me leave that weary spinning," she remarked with much satisfaction."

To us nowadays the brother and sister would have looked a quaint pair. Eleven-year-old Mercy's plain gown of grey homespun, only relieved by the snowy kerchief she wore on her shoulders, reached almost to the ground; while thirteen-year-old Reuben, in his high-crowned hat and knee breeches, was dressed just like his father, or any other grown-up Puritan. But though they wore such different clothes from those modern children wear, and called their mother "madam" on occasion, and their father "sir," it is probable that underneath these little outward dissimilarities they were uncommonly like present-day children; so for the rest of this story I shall drop the "thee" and "thou" which they really used in speaking to each other, and turn what they said into the language they would use nowadays.

"Will you make me a fishing-rod one day soon, Reub?" asked Mercy coaxingly. Reuben's rod was made of a young sapling he had cut down himself, and shaped with his knife. Shops were rare in New England three hundred years ago, and most articles in use were of home manufacture.

"Why, what do you want with one? Fishing's no good for girls."

"Anyhow, father doesn't think so. He said I might fish."

"You dreamed he did, you mean."

"*You* dreamed he didn't, silly."

They went on sparring in the pleasantest fashion. The two were devoted to each other really, and scarcely ever quarrelled in earnest.

They reached the river bank, and conversation ceased. Mercy was far too well trained to talk when fish might be about. Instead, she settled down luxuriously with her hands clasped round her knees, to enjoy all the sights and sounds of the glorious autumn day. How she loved the great broad river—especially the waterfall with its white foam just like giant soapsuds!

Why, somebody had been cutting down quite a lot of trees just round here! What had made him take the trouble to go all this way from the village to do it, she wondered drowsily. The soothing sound of flowing water, together with the heat of the day, were making her quite sleepy.

Until suddenly something happened so extraordinary that she started bolt upright again, and sat staring at one of the cut down tree trunks as though her eyes were coming out of her head!

It *must* have been a fancy! Or perhaps she had been dozing for a moment, and dreamed it. Things like that didn't happen outside dreams. Unless—Mercy grew rather pale.

Ah, there it was again! This time she was *sure* she was not mistaken.

"Reub!" she whispered, pointing with her finger, "do watch that trunk! Oh, and that other one, too!"

"Why, what about them?" Reuben, too, spoke in a whisper for fear of scaring the fish.

"Why, that one moved itself. Twice over it happened. And once that other one, too! Why, there it is again! You can see for yourself. Oh, Reuben, do you think it's some witch's doing?"

In the New England of those days, and I am afraid in Old England, too, people firmly believed in witches, and Mercy knew no better than her neighbours.

Reuben made a barely perceptible sign for "No," adding in the lowest possible of all whispers—it was more like a motion of his lips without any sound coming at all—"Be quiet, and don't seem to notice anything."

Mercy obeyed, feeling horribly frightened. She felt certain that Reuben had sensed some dreadful peril lurking behind the uncanny behaviour of those tree-trunks. She felt a panic longing to get up and rush home as fast as her feet could carry her, but an instinct that she dare not disobey seemed to hold her fast, waiting for Reuben to give the sign. It was as though she knew in some mysterious way that to flee too precipitately might only bring the sinister danger that threatened the more surely upon them.

It was only a minute or two, though it seemed an age, before Reuben said, in a cheerful, matter-of-fact tone, "There don't seem any fish about to-day. Let's go home."

He pulled in his line, put his rod over his shoulder, and they were starting home, when suddenly there was the very slightest rustle. Looking back over their shoulders they saw half a dozen Red Indians, attired in feather head-dresses and brightly-painted clothes, who appeared to have sprung out of the ground!

Almost before the children could move another step, or utter a sound, one savage had hold of Reuben, and another of Mercy.

Utterly terrified, the children glanced from one dusky red face, with its fierce, glittering black eyes, to another. One of the savages was plainly a woman, and wore no head-dress, but otherwise they all seemed alike, and all were figures such as Reuben and Mercy might have dreamed of in the most horrible of nightmares.

"You Red Men's prisoners!" said one of the band who seemed to be the leader. "Red Men kill! Scalp first!" With a gruesomely expressive gesture he touched both children in turn just where the hair began on their foreheads.

Mercy could not help a scream of terror, but she checked it as she heard Reuben's peremptory whisper, "Hush, Mercy! It will only make them worse!"

"Come!" commanded the Redskin leader, and they found themselves being pushed back towards the river bank.

Was drowning to be their end, then, Mercy wondered? Almost she hoped that was the Redskins' idea. It would be a quicker and less cruel death than the Indians usually inflicted on their victims, according to the tales she had heard from older people in the settlement. Besides, Reuben could swim—he might be able to escape. How she wished she could understand what the Redskins were saying as

"He then gave the children a push, and they found themselves in the dim coolness of the cave" (p. 146)

Drawn by Leo Bates

they all jabbered together! Perhaps Reuben did understand—he had learned a few words of the Indian speech from a white hunter who had lived among Redskins for a time. With agonized anxiety Mercy looked at Reuben's face to see if he had been able to make out to what fate they were being led. Reuben's face, however, was as expressionless as a mask, and she could read nothing from it.

They descended the bank to within a few feet of the water, and came suddenly to the opening of a small cave. The Redskin pointed inside. "In!" he ordered. "Stay there! Obey and we kill not. Obey not——" Again he made the horrible scalping gesture.

He then gave the children a push, and they found themselves in the dim coolness of the cave.

After the brilliant sunshine outside, the cave at first seemed pitch dark, but in a few moments their eyes grew used to the dimness and they could see each other.

"What do you think they mean to do with us?" whispered Mercy tremulously.

"I don't know. Keep us as slaves perhaps."

Mercy had not thought of that possibility. "Oh, Reub!" she said in a sobbing whisper, "never to see mother again! I think I'd rather be killed than that—if they didn't do it in a way that hurt too dreadfully!" she added shuddering.

Reuben caught hold of her hand and pulled her to the far end of the cave—a distance of some twenty feet. They stumbled several times in the darkness because of the unevenness of the ground before they were brought up short against the farther wall.

"I wanted to get away as far as we could for fear that man who speaks English may be listening," whispered Reuben.

"If they do make us slaves, perhaps we shall get a chance to run away presently," breathed Mercy.

"We *must* run away—this very day—to give warning of what those Redskins mean to do. Of course, I can't understand much of their jargon; but I'm nearly sure from what I made out that their plan is to stay hidden inside those hollow tree-trunks till darkness falls, and then they'll start a forest fire all round the village, and father and mother and all the rest of the folk will get trapped and burnt to death. I've heard tales of Indians setting fire to a settlement like that before; and the weather has been so hot and dry for a long, long spell, once the fire starts it'll spread like wild, and no one will be able to stop it, though the Redskins themselves will make their escape by the river before it gets really bad."

Mercy had again turned as deathly white as when the Indian made his scalping gesture. "We *must* get away somehow, and give warning of what the Redskins are up to," she said.

"The question is what our best plan is . . . I think we'd better wait a bit, so as to make the Redskins think we're safe to stay here, and then go to the mouth of the cave to see if any of them are on guard. If they're not, I'd swim down the river with the current for a bit, holding on to you, and keeping close to the bank, both so as to be able to land and rest every now and then, and also so that the trees may conceal us. Then we can land for good when we've got far enough away for even the Redskins (who've got as keen a sense of hearing as dogs, almost) not to hear us, and we'll make the best way we can home from there."

There was silence in the cave for a few minutes after this. Both children were thinking hard. "Reub," whispered Mercy suddenly, "I guess I'd better not go with you. If you have to swim holding on to me it'll make it ever so much harder. You'd be much more likely to be caught and stopped, and then—they not only might kill you, but you wouldn't be able to give the warning."

"But Mercy, you'd never dare stay alone here. Indeed, I don't think I ought to leave you here alone. If they came and found I'd escaped, they might wreak their vengeance on you in some horrible way. I couldn't leave you."

"I know"—Mercy's whisper shook a little. "But I'm only one person. It wouldn't be right for you to think of me more than of mother and father and all the other people in the village. It will give you a much better chance of saving them all if you don't try to take me with you."

Reuben did not answer for a moment. He could not bear the thought of leaving his sister alone at the mercy of savages. Still, for that matter she was at their mercy whether he was with her or not, and there was much truth in what she said. At the bottom of his heart Reuben felt very doubtful whether he could swim any distance holding her up too. "Well," he whispered back after a long pause. "I

guess you're the bravest girl in New England!"

"I'm not—but it's the only sensible plan." Mercy sat down suddenly on the cold cave floor, simply because her knees felt too strangely weak and shaky to hold her up any longer. The bravest girl in New England, indeed!

"It's the best chance of saving the others!" she kept repeating to herself, trying by dinning the sentence into herself to crowd out of her mind horrible stories of Indian tortures that she could not help remembering.

After about half an hour Reuben crept to the mouth of the cave and peered out.

"There's not a soul of them to be seen," he whispered on his return. "I guess they're all hiding in their tree-trunks again. I think I'd better not wait any longer—I'll come back with a rescue party without a moment's delay, you can be sure. The Redskins will make off as soon as ever they see us coming along with rifles, I guess—they won't want to wait long enough to do you any harm. They'll know too well that their bows and arrows can't do anything against bullets."

"Of course they will. I'm not a bit afraid," said Mercy, but she was—horribly.

A minute later Mercy heard the gentlest possible splash as Reuben stepped down into the water.

The next sound she heard chilled her blood. "You no get away!" said a gruff Indian voice.

Immediately afterwards Reuben, white faced, and dripping with water, was back in the cave again, standing in the firm grasp of the Redskin leader.

"You try get away—tell friends Redskins about!" he said in fierce guttural anger. "Pay—scalping. Then death."

"Oh, no! No! Have pity!" sobbed Mercy, flinging herself down on her knees before the savage.

The Redskin looked at her with a perfectly unmoved face. "Make cry?" he said. Then, suddenly seizing hold of the kerchief on her shoulder, he pulled it violently off and tore it into halves. Almost before Mercy could utter another sound, he had gagged her very effectively with the one half. Then he turned his attention to Reuben, and gagged him with the other half.

"Scalp—kill both," said the Redskin. "Save trouble after! Wait a little before kill. All our people not come yet. They like share sport. You watch river for more Redskin canoes!"

They did—with straining eyes of terror.

Ah! There it was, coming round the bend of the river, that sinister canoe with its load of Indians, in feather headdresses and gay colours come to enjoy the sport! And there was another—and another—following at some distance behind!

"It will be all over in a little while now! All over in a little while now!" thought Mercy. Almost she longed for the worst to happen—and be over in a little while.

Why—was she dreaming, or had the Redskin gone suddenly mad? What did he mean by that sudden call, and why—he had got his bow and arrow, and was aiming straight at his friends in the first canoe!

Why—why—the Indians in the canoes were putting their bows into position.

Mercy saw no more, for a sudden violent pull from Reuben sent her hurtling away from the cave opening and against the wall.

* * *

"They traitor tribe! We white men's friends!" declared the Indian who unbound the children's gags. The river bank and the cave were swarming with Redskins—glittering-eyed folk who looked just as fierce as the first party, but who were eager to explain the position in their broken English.

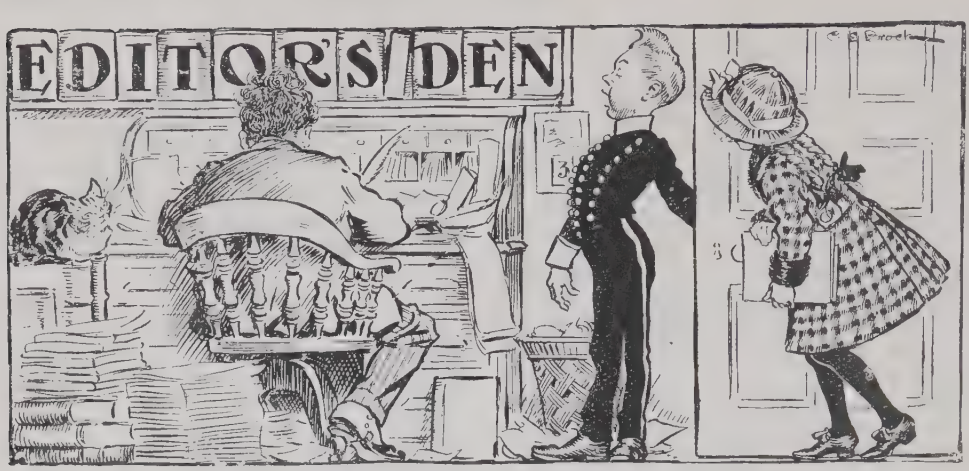
Their tribe had made a treaty with the white people, it seemed, a treaty which had been honourably kept. "We tribe always keep promise!" This other tribe, however, having a feud with them, had formed the base plan of burning the white people out, in the hope that suspicion would fall on the Indians who had made the treaty, and that the vengeance of the English would effect what they themselves had failed to do: namely, destroy their rivals.

"They no live in this part, but over the mountains—no one guess they do it," explained the chief spokesman.

"Well, they'll all know now who did it! Reuben and I will take good care to tell them!" said Mercy, who was laughing and crying at once.

"You silly!" said Reuben, "these people have driven them away before they could do anything! They've all fled."

"All fled!" repeated the Redskin. "They cowards! We brave! Always keep promise! White men's friends!"



MAKING A MOTOR-CAR

Spring and the Poets

SPRING, more or less, is here—that is, the rain and the snow, and heat waves get mixed up with spring poets and printers' boys and new competitions. Every morning, on my arrival at the Den, there are piles of letters about the new volume and the photography competition. Scarcely have I replied to these when the spring poets arrive, and the tame artists. One yesterday, alas! insisted on reciting his poem in full, and he was so loud and dramatic that the people passing in the corridor thought I had a loud-speaker installed on the wireless. Then, when at length I reach home, there is the ex-Youngest Reader—or the Youngest Editor, as she should be called nowadays—editing a magazine of her own and worrying me to build a motor-car and have the wireless installed.

An Awkward Request

Build a motor-car! The truth is, your Editor is very un-handy with his hands. That is why he employs Uncle Useful to conduct the Pets and Pastimes Pages. Uncle Useful is so terribly handy that there does not seem anything he can't do. Now the Youngest Editor is firmly convinced that your Editor ought to be like any other respectable Heads of Households—able to knock a nail in, build a house, or install a wireless, instead of merely writing about it. Some time ago—heaven knows why—she got it into her head that she ought to have a toy motor-car that she could wheel the Youngest Reader about in; and, naturally enough, I suppose, thought I was the proper person to construct the same. So at the summer holidays day after day she worried me to begin. I told her the weather was too hot, but that I would think about it in the Christmas holidays. At Christmas, just as I was recovering from the effects of the Christmas pudding, she returned to the attack and persisted that I ought to start forthwith. I told her it was too cold, and advised her to wait till Easter.

Still Uppermost

When the Easter holidays came I thought the matter would be forgotten. Alas! I was getting out the real car preparatory to the first spring ride, and wondering what was the matter with the accumulator, when she started up with: "Oh, when *are* you going to start with *my* motor-car?"

I was sprawling full length under the car, trying to squirt some oil into the works. The remark so startled me that I squirted some into my eye instead. "Oh, bother!" I said. (Nothing stronger, of course. Editors are never allowed to say anything stronger than this, except to Carrots, and tame artists.)

"Yes, but you said, 'Wait till Easter,'" persisted the Youngest Editor.

"Oh, I'll think about it," I replied, and, undoing the crank-case oil tap by mistake, I dropped a flood of dirty oil all over my face.

Just at that moment the Youngest

Reader came running up. He only knows a few words as yet. "Get down," "up," "'at's better," and the like. But "car" has unfortunately just been added to his vocabulary, and "Car! Car!" he shouted as soon as he caught sight of me and the machine on top of me.

It isn't only the word that had caught his fancy, however. He has developed a perfect passion for motoring, and insists on accompanying me in the car whenever possible.

Making a Start

When I had wiped the oil off my face I promised to keep my eye open next day and see if I could get some wheels. "You can't put up a car without wheels, you know," I explained gravely.

("Ough!" said Uncle Useful, when he heard that. "The wheels are the *last* part of the car to see about!")

However, lunch time next day I wandered down Farringdon Road. As luck would have it I discovered some wheels on a stall, and promptly purchased four. I hauled them home, and the Youngest Editor was mightily impressed. She was just going to ask about the rest of the works when the Youngest Reader came bustling around.

"Car! Car!" he exclaimed.

"Where's mumma?" I asked.

"Gone!" he replied laconically.

"Where's nurse?" I further inquired.

"Gone!" he responded briefly.

"Where's—where's the hippopotamus from the Zoo?" I asked desperately.

"Gone!" he replied promptly and sadly, and then: "Car! Car!"

"Want to go out in the car?"

A most emphatic sign of approval escaped his lips. (I'm sorry he can't say "Yes!" yet—so is he.) So I had to take him out.

Carrots to the Rescue

When next I went to the Den I sent an urgent message up to the Printing Department, demanding proofs and the stories for the next Christmas Number. Carrots came along post-haste to explain that they had not yet received "copy" from me.

"It doesn't matter," I explained easily. "As a matter of fact, Carrots, I thought you might be able to help me in—er—a little matter. By the way, you eat toffee?"

Carrots accepted, without any undue emotion, the half-pound packet of "De Luxe" I had purchased for him. "What's the gime?" he asked.

"It just occurred to me that a little toy motor might interest the Youngest Reader, Carrots. I believe it is possible to construct rough-and-ready affairs of that nature, and I thought perhaps you might have had some experience in their manufacture?"

Carrots rolled one of the toffees round his tongue and reduced it to manageable proportions before replying:

"Get a Tate box, and shove four wheels on 'er," he suggested.

"What's a Tate box?"

"Sugar box. Git it at yer grocer's," explained Carrots.

I thanked the youth and said I would send up some more "copy" shortly.

Help from the Grocer

That evening I visited the local grocer's, and explained that, now the Chancellor of the Exchequer had lowered the duty on sugar I was wishful of purchasing a whole box of that useful commodity.

The grocer man stared at me, but after some minutes admitted that he could supply a whole boxful of sugar.

I ordered him to send it home; and that night I dug a big hole in the garden in order to stow away the sugar—Peter might get hold of it and make himself ill, or the cat might eat it up.

Next morning when, for the fiftieth time, the Youngest Editor asked me when I was going to start on her motor, I assured her that interesting developments might shortly be expected. She was about to ask further questions, when Peter rushed out, with "Car! Car!"

Out for the Day

The upshot of it was that we had to go picnicking for the day.

Mrs. Editor prepared a nice luncheon of sandwiches and trifle, the Youngest Editor found a flask and filled it with water, in case of thirst on the journey, and the Youngest Reader gave no peace to anybody until he had had his "things" put on and was duly installed in the dickey for the journey.

Once we had started he was as good as

gold, watching with keen interest the sights of the countryside. Mrs. Editor sighed with relief. "That boy!" she exclaimed. "It's a mercy to have a moment's respite!" Then in two minutes young Peter was fast asleep in the arms of his sister. (Motoring always has that effect on the youth—that is, unless it makes his face go whiter and whiter and we have to stop the car hurriedly in case something should happen!)

Arriving at our destination, the car stopped, the Youngest Reader awoke, said "Car! Car! Get down! Get down!" and we all alighted and had lunch.

Peter's Pickly Picnic

Ah, me! Dear readers, if you have any little baby brothers, aged eighteen months, don't take them out picnicking! Young Peter first seized his sandwich and dropped it in the mud, then started to pour out "milkie" from the Youngest Editor's flask, missed fire and poured it over Mrs. Editor's dress; then, when expostulated with, subsided into the dish of trifle, with very awful results. It was indeed a memorable picnic.

It came on to rain immediately after, so we hurriedly gathered our things together and dashed home. Arriving early we were met by the nursemaid, who looked solemn-eyed and explained that the dustman had called, and had fallen over a hole in the garden and nearly broken his leg or his neck. Also that the grocer's boy had come up with a huge box of sugar instead of the two pounds of Demerara that Mrs. Editor had ordered. She had made him take it back, and he "carried on something awful about it."

I expressed commiseration, but thought it better not to enter into explanations. Just then the railway van toiled up the hill, and a man alighted, bearing a huge box on his head. It was addressed to the Youngest Editor. Young Rosemary opened it amid general excitement. It was a motor-car!

After everybody had done exclaiming, Rosemary explained that some weeks ago she had written to Uncle Sydney and had mentioned how much she wanted a toy motor-car. Well, he had gone and made one—and here it was.

A good thing I didn't make one after all!

What *Shall* I Do?

I wish I could leave off just here, but Carrots says there is not enough to fill the page, so I must write some more.

Well, the toy motor was a great success. Peter took to it from the first, and it was wonderful to see him sitting on the seat, gripping the steering-wheel just as if he were really driving. The Youngest Editor pulled him round the village on it first day, and had rare fun. Peter wanted to pull off the windscreen, but was unsuccessful.

The toy motor was the dinkiest thing on earth—until last night young Peter left it out in the hall; the light wasn't put on owing to daylight saving; the hall grew dark owing to clouds; I was in a hurry, and—plunk! I went over that wretched motor-car and fell sprawling. I bumped my head a bit and scraped my shins. The Youngest Reader says that doesn't matter. What does matter is that I broke the axle of the car, and knocked off one of its wheels.

"Mend it!" suggests Mrs. Editor.

"Mend it!" orders the Youngest Editor.

"Car! Car!" exclaims Peter.

Dear readers, what *shall* I do?

The Editor

HOW ANIMALS TELL THE WEATHER

"Wild Nature as a Weather Prophet" is one of the special articles in the July Number of THE QUIVER. When you are "too old" for LITTLE FOLKS take THE QUIVER.

The Shop Kitten

And How it Converted Aunt Isabel

By Evelyn Smith

"COME on, Timmy. If you'll let me button up your coat we'll go past the shop kitten."

"Want it," said Timmy instantly.

"You can't have it; you know you can't. You know Auntie Isabel can't stand cats, let alone kittens."

Jill gave a little sigh. There were so many things Aunt Isabel couldn't stand, and so many of them were things that she and Timmy particularly liked. She had promised her mother that, for the three long months she and her little brother were to be away from home, neither of them would give any trouble, but there were more ways of giving trouble than she had guessed. Animals in the house, for instance. Even a tadpole worried Aunt Isabel—as if a tadpole could leave muddy marks in the hall, or spoil the best cushions. And noise. Timmy's trumpet had certainly been monotonous; Jill herself had sometimes wished he would burst it or lose it; and perhaps Aunt Isabel's peremptory confiscation of it was justifiable; but there were other sounds, impossible to be avoided in play, that were forbidden. Jill wondered if her aunt just imagined that she heard them. Constantly she complained of being kept awake by tiresome and terrible noises, which she attributed to the people next door. As there were no such people, next door being the empty rooms over a shop, Jill thought this unreasonable.

"P'r'aps it's mice," she said, hoping that her aunt would get a cat.

"Never had a mouse in the house," said Aunt Isabel proudly.

"Want a mouse," said Timmy.

It was awkward, the way Timmy wanted things, and Court Street, where Aunt Isabel lived, gave him every opportunity. It was the main street of an old county town, where all sorts of buildings jostled one another—the school founded by Edward VI, a bit of the castle wall crowned with flowers, a tiny baker's shop, an Elizabethan cottage which tourists came to see, a tea-room faked up to look like the cottage, a sensible ordinary bright grocer's shop, the beautiful old Georgian house where Aunt Isabel lived—all stood shoulder to shoulder, as it were. And Timmy wanted the bits of wallflower and stonecrop from the castle; he wanted a jam-tart or a macaroon from the baker's; he wanted to go into the tea-room and have an ice—a treat Aunt Isabel had once unfortunately given him; he wanted endless things from the grocer's, chiefly the grocer's kitten.

Jill wanted it too.

She pretended to go past the shop as a treat for Timmy, but, had she been alone, she would not have gone the other way, even if she had had an errand to do in the opposite direction; she would have slipped into the shop to have a look at the kitten. On this particular morning he was at his very best, rolling over on the sawdust-strewn floor and pretending to catch phantom mice, becoming soft as a black plume when poked gently between his front paws, closing them tightly over Jill's hand and shutting his eyes, then suddenly springing into life again, a furious, softly biting, and sharply but not too sharply scratching little monster. Jill lifted him up and kissed his head. It was hot with the sun, and smelt of sawdust.

"Oh, isn't he sweet!" was all that she could say. "Isn't he *sweet!*"

"Want him," said Timmy.

"Well, be careful. Don't hurt him."

Timmy, with an expression of the deepest concern, stretched out his short arms and took the kitten, so carefully that it slipped like a little shadow between his hands and was gone, to leap on its tabby mother, washing herself in the sun, with such force that her paw was jerked from her busy tongue. Timmy roared with laughter.

"Oh, see what the kitty did!" he cried. "See what the kitty did!"

Mr. Porter, the grocer, looked to see, as did the other customers in the shop. Mr. Porter smiled at Timmy.

"He seems to like the kitty, doesn't he?" he re-

marked. "Would he like to have the kitty, d'you think?"

"It's very good of you!" faltered Jill.

"Not at all. One cat's enough in the place. We had to get rid of the other kittens, and we'll have to find a home for this little chap. He's a nice kitten, isn't he?"

The kitten rolled over in the sawdust and blinked its eyes at Mr. Porter.

"He's a darling!" said Jill. "But I'd have to ask Auntie Isabel. I'd simply love Timmy to have him, of course."

"Want him," proclaimed Timmy. "Want the kitten."

He stroked its head carefully, but with an air of proprietorship. Jill was pretty certain that he had heard Mr. Porter's offer.

"Come along, now, Timmy," she said nervously. "We'll come back and see the kitty another time."

"We'll take the kitty home," announced Timmy.

"Yes, dear, but we must ask Auntie Isabel first. If she says yes, we'll come back and fetch it."

Timmy's lower lip trembled. Poor Jill guessed that in another minute he would give utterance to a roar which she felt sure was more powerful than that of other small boys, the champion baby roar in the kingdom. She wondered if it would be possible to smuggle the kitten into the house to pacify him, and to smuggle it back into the shop to pacify Aunt Isabel. There were several people at the counter, and one of the things she hated most was the expression of onlookers when Timmy began to cry. She hesitated, while Mr. Porter tactfully withdrew, and began to dig tea out of a canister with great energy. It was no good. To take back the kitten without permission would only mean trouble. Timmy would just have to cry.

He did. When, repeating "We'll come back and see the kitty," she took Timmy's hand, he wrenched it from her with a loud roar of indignation. He flung himself down on the floor of the shop. When she tried to lift him up, he made himself long and stiff and difficult to hold. Customers said: "Oh, *poor* little boy!" or "What's wrong with that baby?" or "That's temper." At last Jill half dragged, half carried him out into the street. He tried to bolt back into the shop. Now and then, amid his loud and tearless cries, the word "kitty" could be heard. Passers-by looked indignant or amused or curious. Jill did not detect one sympathetic glance, and never, she felt, had she needed sympathy so badly. When, after what seemed an hour, she succeeded in getting him into the house, there was Aunt Isabel to face.

"You mustn't let him cry out-of-doors like that, Jill! What in the world is the matter with the child?"

"He wanted that shop kitten!" gasped Jill, pressing her hands to her hot cheeks.

"You know I don't like cats. I wouldn't have a cat in the house."

"Yes, auntie, I know. He hasn't got the kitten. That's the trouble."

"He is a very badly spoilt little boy. Oh, my poor head!" Aunt Isabel put her hand to her forehead. "Miriam, come and take Master Timothy upstairs and put him in his cot till he has recovered."

Miriam, a strapping, good-natured country girl, bore Timmy off, and Jill, thoroughly mortified, went to her room to put on her prettiest frock, for Aunt Isabel was to have visitors that afternoon, and liked her to hand round tea and cake.

When she had washed, and brushed her hair, and put on her yellow silk frock, she felt rather better; and, having ascertained that Timmy, thoroughly exhausted, had fallen asleep, she went downstairs into the pretty flowery room, where she knew her aunt would receive her visitors. Tea was laid on the veranda off this room, opening out on to a square, shady old garden. Only two callers had arrived, and Aunt Isabel was telling them of her troubles.

"It's dreadful to be so sensitive to *noise*," she was saying. "Every little sound seems to fill my poor head until I feel as if it were going to burst. I'm fond of this house, but I think I shall have to move to a quieter place."

It was good of her not to be complaining about Timmy, thought Jill.

"I suppose you hear all the traffic of the street!" said one of the visitors.

"Yes, but at the back of the house and in the garden one can escape from all that. That's not the difficulty; it's the noise at night. Such bangings and clatterings. Jill says that no one lives next door, but I'm sure they have let the rooms on one floor, and to very noisy, tiresome people."

The callers buzzed sympathy, and Jill slipped out on the veranda to see if Miriam had brought tea, and incidentally to find out if any of her favourites were among

"Softly, proudly across the hearthrug, came the small black form of the shop kitten" (p. 154)

Drawn by John Cameron

the tempting cakes set out on the pretty silver dishes. Yes; there they were: chocolate pralines and coconut pyramids. Across the lawn Miriam was carrying a tray with the little silver kettle and its lamp, and the teapot. Poor Timmy! Perhaps Aunt Isabel would relent, and send for him. After having been naughty, he was generally particularly good. Tea looked so specially enticing to-day; it was hard luck that he should miss all the good things.

Yes, the cakes did look enticing, but——

Some of the bonbons from a small filigree dish near the tea-tray were scattered on the table. The cloth was askew. There were muddy marks on it. A spreading pool of pale golden cream crawled round the tea-cosy, crouching on which, head bent forward, pink tongue busy and blissful, was the shop kitten.

"Oh!" exclaimed Jill. "Oh, Miriam, look!"

Aunt Isabel ran out on to the veranda.

"Jill! You have been encouraging that cat to come in here!"

"Auntie, I haven't! Truly, I haven't. I never saw him in here before. I never have asked him in, or given him a thing to eat—not a thing!"

"Set the table afresh, Miriam! Scat! Scat!" Aunt Isabel made a dive for the kitten, who raised his head and gave her the most innocent look in the world, though his whiskers were covered with cream. Not until she made her intentions quite clear by wrenching away the tea-cosy from beneath him, and giving him a good sharp flick with it, did he attempt to budge. Then he leapt from the table, and fled through the open door leading from the veranda into the house.

"You must find it, Jill," said Aunt Isabel, with dreadful calm. "Don't come down here to tea until you can tell me that that cat has been found and returned to Porter's. Be as quick as you can—catch it before it does any further damage."

Jill obeyed. Up and down stairs did she hunt for the shop kitten. She looked under the beds and behind curtains and on cushions and eiderdowns. She searched in jugs and basins and in the bath. "Puss, puss, puss!" she called. "Kitty, kitty, kitty! Milk, kitty! Cream! Cat's meat!

Me-ee-eat!" Timmy awoke, and began at once to announce: "Want the kitty!" Miriam joined in the search. It was useless. By the time Jill had looked in every place she could think of, had even run out into Porter's to see if the little rascal had slipped back to his own home and was tormenting his tabby mother at the shop door, tea was over. Timmy was cross and crying; Aunt Isabel was vexed because her prettiest cloth and her rose-coloured silk cosy were stained, and she had had to give her callers milk instead of cream in their tea.

"It's been a dreadful day!" thought Jill, as she disconsolately took off her yellow frock and thought of all the good things she had never tasted. "I believe that shop kitten isn't a kitten at all, he's brought such bad luck. He's just a wicked little fairy, and he has made himself invisible because he knows we want to catch him and punish him."

Then she remembered how pretty the kitten had been as he played in the shop that morning, and how soft he had felt. Her heart melted to him; she couldn't help it.

"All the same, he *is* a little darling," she thought. "I wish Auntie Isabel could have a dream about him which would make her wake in the morning quite willing to forgive him, because she would be quite convinced that he is the beautifullest kit in the world."

With this desire she fell asleep. Next morning was more cheerful, as next mornings always are. Timmy was good at breakfast-time, and, though she had not slept well, and complained of the noises that had disturbed her in the early part of the night, Aunt Isabel did not repine over the spoiling of her cloth and her cosy, nor did she again advance the theory that it was through Jill's encouragement that the villain of a shop kitten had come into the house.

"Miriam, did *you* hear noises next door last night?" she asked, as the maid came in to clear away the breakfast things.

"No, miss. I always was a sound sleeper."

"It's most extraordinary. I do wish I could account for it."

"Oh lor', miss—I'm sorry, but 'e gave me such a turn!" And Miriam stepped quickly aside as if to avoid treading on something. Aunt Isabel gasped, Timmy raised himself up in his high chair, and Jill, who was untying his feeder, stopped in the midst of loosening a knot and looked round to see what had startled Miriam.

Softly, proudly across the hearth-rug came the small black form of the shop kitten. By the scruff of the neck he dragged another form, brown, stiff, almost as big as himself. Patiently he dragged it to the shrinking feet of Aunt Isabel. Then he laid it down, looked up at her with eyes that seemed greener than any eyes could be, and gave a proud, deep miaow.

"A rat!" cried Jill.

"Want it," announced Timmy firmly.

"A rat—that's what it is!" exclaimed Miriam. "That's what's been worrying you, miss. Rats! I was a softy not to have thought of it before."

"But could rats make so much noise?" said Aunt Isabel faintly.

"Noise! Why, miss, I was in service at a mill house once, and such a noise you never heard! Up and down behind the panelling all over, they was; you'd have said bodies was being dragged about if you hadn't known it was unlikely."

"They'll be after the stores packed away in Porter's upstairs rooms," said Jill.

"That'll be it, miss. My word! Fancy that little kitten tackling a great big fellow like that. Some dogs won't do it. Grand little fellow, isn't 'e?"

The kitten proudly seized his rat, as if, having shown what he could do, and made honourable amends to Aunt Isabel, he now intended to be off.

"Puss, puss!" said Aunt Isabel, rubbing his head. It did not seem quite natural for her to do such a thing, but obviously she meant well, and Jill, greatly daring, seized the moment.

"Mr. Porter offered him to Timmy yesterday morning," she said, in a very low voice. "We were to ask you."

"Just run round to Porter's now, Jill," said Aunt Isabel, "thank him very much, and say that your aunt is delighted that Timmy should have the shop kitten."

Detectives in Toyland

Written and Illustrated by S.G.Hulme Beaman

"THIS village is as dull as ditchwater," said Sheerluck Homes to his friend Rotson as they sat together in the farmhouse.

"I am afraid you are not enjoying your holiday," replied Dr. Rotson.

"Enjoying it!" cried Homes; "it is the worst holiday I have ever had. No murders, no robberies, no crime of any sort. A nice holiday, indeed."

"Never mind," said his friend. "But look, I can see the village policeman coming up the path. Perhaps he is coming for your advice; one never knows."

"*I* know," Sheerluck Homes replied shortly. "I know exactly what he is coming for; I can see by the way he is walking. I am not going to tell you what, but when he arrives you will see I am right."

At that moment there was a knock upon the door, and the policeman entered. He was a rather fat policeman, and his eyes were so very round that he looked quite frightened. "Are you the great detective, Mr. Sheerluck Homes?" he inquired of Dr. Rotson.

"No, I am not," replied Rotson (feeling rather pleased at the compliment, however). "That is the great Sheerluck Homes in the funny dressing-gown."

The policeman bowed politely to the famous detective, and cleared his throat nervously. " A dreadful murder has been committed," he said.

"Hoorah!" shouted Sheerluck Homes, waving his pipe. "At last we shall have a real holiday."

"My friend is never happy unless he is detecting," Dr. Rotson explained.

"Ah!" said the policeman. "My father was like that; he was always detecting something. He was constable in this village before me. Always detecting, he was. He detected one of Mr. Noah's young sons once stealing a wheel off the train. My father was hiding behind a hedge, so he detected him all right."

"I hope you have come to see me about something more important than the theft of a tin wheel," said Homes.

"It was a lead wheel," replied the constable, "all our train wheels are lead. Though the farmer has a cart with wooden wheels," he added, after a pause for thought.

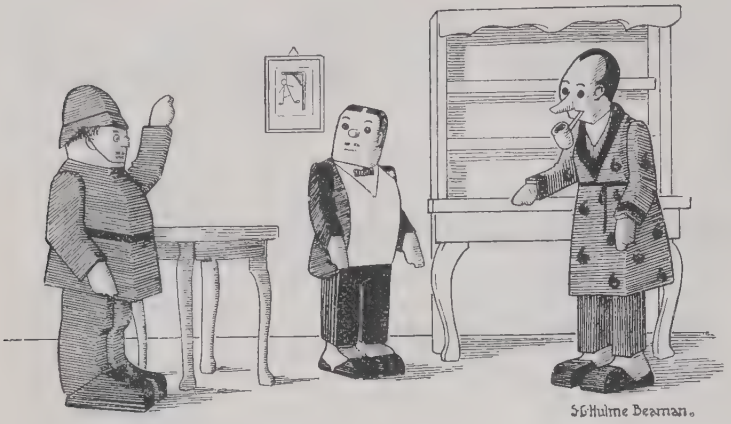
"Never mind the wheels," cried Homes impatiently, "what about the crime?"

"A dreadful murder has been committed," said the policeman. "An awful crime. A black golliwog has been found torn to pieces near the duck-pond, and we suspect"—he lowered his voice to a whisper—"we suspect a blue elephant that's connected with the circus."

"Why do you suspect the blue elephant?" Sheerluck Homes asked.

"Well, it's like this," the policeman said. "In the night everybody heard dreadful noises, like an elephant blowing his trunk. I stopped in bed, but some people ran out, and a soldier (not quite one of us, he's not; he's one of those solid all-the-way-up soldiers, not one of the good-class hollow fellows) says that he ran down to the pond and he saw this blue elephant galloping off with his paws covered with the sawdust of his victim."

"It looks rather black for the blue



"'A dreadful murder has been committed,' said the policeman" (p. 156)

Drawn by S. G. Hulme Beaman

elephant," remarked Dr. Rotson. "Have you arrested him?"

"No," the policeman replied, "we have not. He ran away, and we don't know where he is."

"An elephant is a large thing to remain hidden for very long," said Homes thoughtfully. "But if you are so sure the elephant committed the crime, why do you come to me?"

The policeman looked a trifle confused. "Well, sir," he said, "as we can't catch the elephant I thought you might be able to find someone else who might have done the murder."

"Very likely," Homes said. "At any rate, I shall be pleased to look into the case. It looks a very nice little problem, Rotson, does it not? The problem of the Blue Elephant."

Sheerluck Homes began to bustle about, removing the dressing-gown, of which he was so proud, and placing in his pocket a tape-measure and a large magnifying-glass.

"Is that to see the blue elephant with?" asked the policeman with a grin.

"*I'll* make all the jokes that are necessary," answered Homes severely. "*You* can do any arresting that is needed."

They set out from the farm, and soon reached the scene of the crime. Here the ground was trampled up and several trees had been knocked down, while traces of sawdust could still be seen scattered about. It was evident that the golliwog had sold his life dearly. Homes went down on his knees and examined the footprints very closely. One set of footprints seemed to interest him particularly; they were all over the scene of the struggle, and then led away across the fields.

"These marks are very curious," said Homes. "They are very large indeed, and of a peculiar shape. What animal made these footprints, Rotson? What do they remind you of?"

Dr. Rotson tried to look as wise as possible, and thought for a few minutes. "I know!" he exclaimed brightly. "A cater-pillar."

"Don't be silly, Rotson," said Homes sternly. "A caterpillar has no feet."

"No feet!" cried Rotson indignantly. "I'm sure——"

"Constable," said Sheerluck Homes, "I ask you, have caterpillars any feet? You must have had plenty of opportunities of studying insect life during your rounds."

The policeman scratched his head. "Well, sir," he answered, "I don't rightly know. I have never seen caterpillars running."

"I'm sure they have," Rotson said sulkily. "Why, I have read about traction engines being fitted with caterpillars' feet on the wheels."

"Ha!" shouted Homes. "A traction engine. I believe you have hit it. You do have flashes of intelligence sometimes, my dear Rotson."

Rotson flushed with pleasure at these words of praise; but the policeman was

"'These are the constable's footprints, not the elephant's,' cried Homes in triumph"

inclined to argue. "The murder could not have been committed by a traction engine," he began. "Besides, they don't look like the marks of a traction engine to me."

"Don't interrupt," shouted Homes. "I must find out something, and I tell you——"

"Well, at any rate there isn't a traction engine in the place," said the policeman. "So you can guess again."

"I never guess," replied Homes. "I deduce."

"Well, deduce again," the policeman said.

"I know!" cried Rotson; "these are the footprints of the elephant."

"They are certainly large enough," said Homes thoughtfully. Then with a shout of "Hold up his feet, Rotson," he snatched the tape measure from his pocket and applied it to the foot of the policeman, as the latter fell back into the arms of Dr. Rotson.

"These are the constable's footprints, my dear Rotson, not the elephant's," cried Homes in triumph.

"Well, who said they weren't?" cried the policeman angrily. "I could have told you that."

"Then why didn't you?" asked Homes. "You seem to have been playing touch with yourself all over the scene of the crime. How can you expect me to detect a crime when you have trodden out all the clues?"

The constable sulked, and said nothing.

"We will now view the body," said Homes; "it may tell us something."

"It won't. It's dead," said the policeman, still sulking.

"Where is the body?" Homes asked, ignoring this remark.

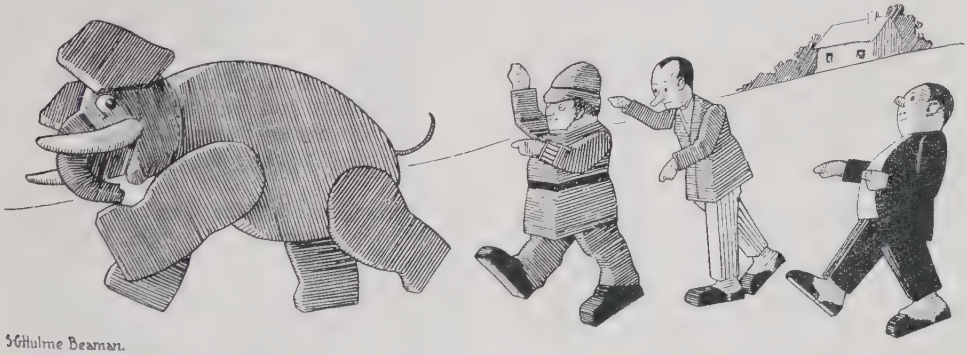
The policeman pondered. "Well, I don't rightly know," he replied. "I expect they've used the sawdust to stuff something else by this time. There may be a little red and blue cloth left, if they haven't made dolls' dresses out of it."

Led by the policeman they passed on to the village, but here Sheerluck Homes found disappointment awaiting him, for the murdered golliwog had already been made into something else. Homes questioned everyone in the village, his friend Rotson taking down their answers in a note-book, but his writing was so large that he filled his book long before the detective had finished his examination. However, as Rotson only wrote down the answers, and forgot to note the questions, his work was not of much use to anyone.

"Life seems to be cheap in these country villages, my dear Rotson," remarked Homes, as he and his friend walked slowly back to their farm. Homes was sucking a stick of chocolate-nougat which he had purchased in the village, but he walked so quickly with his long legs, that Rotson, who was rather plump, had some difficulty in keeping up with him. "I must have a quiet pipe over this problem," Homes continued, "and think things over."

"If you're going to smoke your pipe," said Rotson, "you might pass your nougat on to me. I'm rather hungry." Homes pretended not to hear.

When they had reached home, the great detective put on his favourite dressing-gown and lit his pipe. Rotson, on seeing him to be smoking, began searching the room, opening the drawers, and even looking under the carpet. "What are you looking for, my dear Rotson?" Homes asked.



S. G. Hulme Beaman.

"Over the fields they all raced, the elephant occasionally looking round and waving his trunk" (p. 158)

Drawn by S. G. Hulme Beaman

"Nothing," replied dear Rotson, looking rather angry.

"Then don't fidget, please. I want to think out this problem." Homes smoked for a few minutes in silence, and then went on: "The matter seems to stand in this way—*do* sit down, my dear Rotson—a golliwog is found murdered, and its body is at once disposed of; disposed of so quickly that detectives are not even able to see it. What does that suggest to you, Rotson?"

"Nothing," replied Rotson, yawning slightly.

"Then, again, we find another curious state of affairs. The scene of the murder has been so trampled over by the police that all clues there are destroyed. Why did that fat policeman run all over the ground in that way? I ask you, my dear Rotson."

"Perhaps he wanted to keep his feet warm," answered Rotson sleepily.

"No, Rotson. No. Do you know what I think? The wilful destruction of all clues; the fact that we have never even seen this blue elephant; the rude behaviour of that fat policeman; the——" But friend Rotson was asleep.

Early next morning Homes was awake and dressed, ready for the labours of the day. But Rotson slept peacefully, being still very tired from the labours of yesterday, and Homes had to shake him very roughly before he could awaken him.

After breakfast they set out together for the fields. They had not gone very far before they saw the policeman walking towards them, and although he looked a trifle sulky, he touched his helmet and explained that he was going across the fields to see if he could find any traces of the elephant. They all plodded on for some time, Homes in front, the policeman next, and Rotson a bad last. And just as they reached a hedge a large blue shape jumped up from behind some bushes, and commenced to gallop off as hard as it could. It was the blue elephant.

"Stop it, Rotson! Stop it!" shouted Homes (although he was much nearer the elephant than Rotson, who was panting in the rear). They all leapt forward and took up the pursuit; and although the policeman was fat he proved to be a good runner, for he soon left the others behind him. Over the fields they all raced, the elephant occasionally looking round and waving his trunk, the policeman slowly catching him up, Homes waving his arms and shouting, and Rotson slowly trailing in behind.

At last the elephant dashed into a little wood, knocking over one or two trees, and stopping. "I'm home," he cried; "you can't touch me."

The others gathered round. "He's quite right," said the policeman; "he's touching wood."

Homes and Rotson looked at him in surprise. "We're not allowed to arrest people here when they're touching wood," the policeman explained.

"Then we've had all our trouble for nothing," Homes cried. "Do you mean to say you will let him go?"

"If he likes to leave off touching wood——" began the policeman.

"Of all the silly things——" exclaimed Homes. "Hi, you, Jumbo, or whatever your name is. There's one thing we had better settle now. Did you, or did you not, tear that golliwog to pieces?"

"Yes, of course," replied the elephant. "I thought that's what you were chasing me for."

"Well, that's all we want to know," the policeman interrupted. "So long as we know who did it. Now, you be careful," he warned the elephant, "we can't have that sort of thing here"

"He said I was a funny colour," complained the elephant.

"All I can say is, you ought to be ashamed," said the policeman. "Don't you do it again. Well, gentlemen," he continued, as they walked back towards the farm, "I am much obliged to you for your help. As it happens, I could have found the murderer myself"—he puffed out his cheeks with importance—"but I thank you just the same."

"A funny village to come to for a holiday, my dear Rotson," said Homes that evening, as they sat beside the fire. "They don't seem to pay much attention to crime. I hope other villages are not the same, or it will be of little use for me to detect anything."

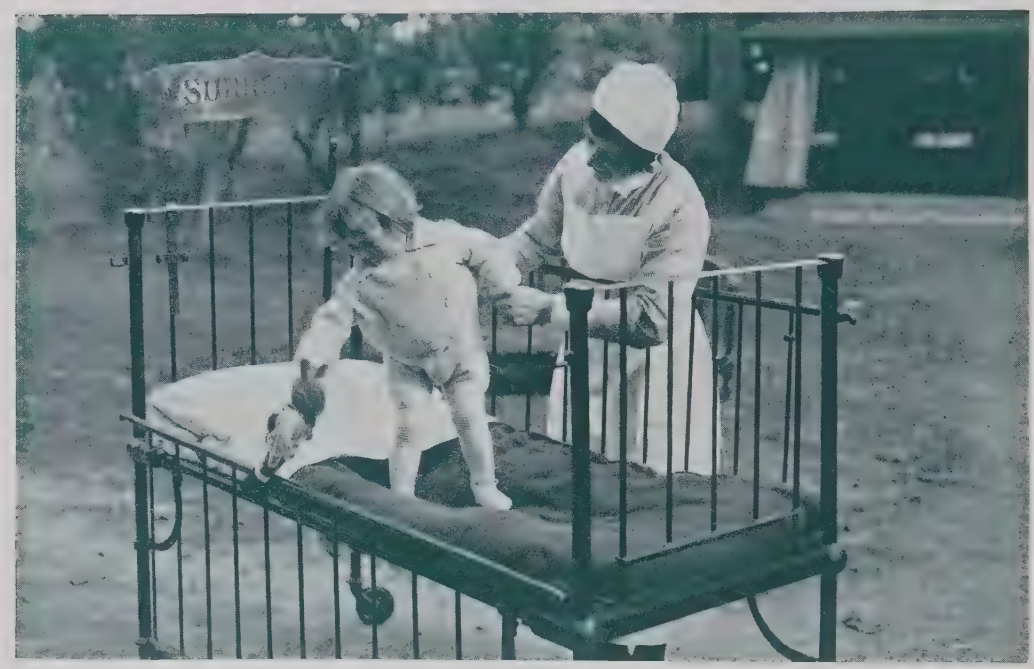
"And what will you do then?" asked Rotson sleepily.

"I shall eat chocolate-nougat," replied Sheerluck Homes; and he withdrew from the pocket of his dressing-gown a nasty, sticky lump and commenced to suck it.

"*WHAT* DID YOU SAY?"

(Drawn by E. Dorothy Rees)

SUMMER-TIME AT BEXHILL



"Come, now, it's time you went to sleep!"

MERRY PADDLERS

These children enjoy the sea so much more because they come from the East End of London, and do not often get a chance of a holiday. You are helping to keep them at the Little Folks Home at Bexhill

CHAPTER IV (*Continued*)

A Rough Time

"IT must be stopped! I will not rest until I have run this villain to earth and have handed him over to the law for the punishment he deserves!" cried Dr. Bastable, as he stared upwards through the murky, driving rain-squalls at the dancing, flickering, golden light on the aerial wires of the little *Radio*.

The face of the scientist was drawn and anxious as he spoke and his fists were clenched in grim determination. The situation was serious, for it was evident that both the little motor-yacht and the disabled brig she was so valiantly towing were in the gravest danger. At any moment the storm might overwhelm them and send them both to the bottom of the wild Atlantic.

"But it cannot be done on purpose! It is impossible that anyone could be so dastardly, so inhuman, as to break in on our signals when they must have known them to be a matter of life or death for us and those poor fellows on the brig!" cried Roger, staring out over his uncle's shoulder at the mysterious light of the Golden Ray. "It cannot be done on purpose!"

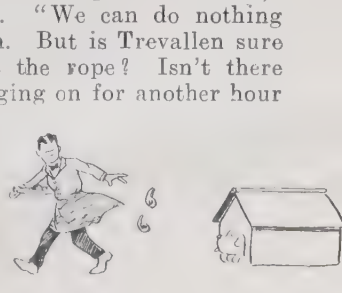
"I don't know. I don't know," whispered Dr. Bastable, his voice tense with anxiety. "Whatever it is it must be stopped. I am glad that I have the job of tracking it down."

As he spoke they could see a shadowy form slipping and sliding toward them along the heaving spray-drenched deck of the yacht. It was Tom Allen, the mate. He reached them at last, and they withdrew from the door of the wireless cabin, so that he could take advantage of the blessed shelter of its walls and roof.

"We shall have to cut the tow rope, Dr. Bastable," he shouted as he followed them inside. "The skipper says it is a question of saving ourselves. She may drag us under any minute. And we are not making headway. The engines are doing their utmost, but they won't hold her. We are stationary now. If the wind gets worse we shall start to drift backwards, and then it will be all up with us. We shall be smashed and beaten to matchwood. Haven't you been able to get in touch with any ship that will stand by us?"

For answer Dr. Bastable shook his head and pointed upwards through the still open door to the Golden Ray dancing on the aerial.

"We had just picked up the *Sandonah*, United States cruiser, when that fiendish ray came and wiped the signals clean out," he said miserably. "We can do nothing until it goes again. But is Trevallen sure that we must cut the rope? Isn't there any chance of hanging on for another hour or so? It seems to me that the storm must



soon blow itself out. I cannot bear the thought of sending all those poor fellows to their death."

"Captain Trevallen says that he would have cut twenty minutes ago but for your orders that we were to hang on to the last possible moment," declared the mate. "The storm is at its last gasp, I think, but it will be an hour or so before it takes up, and it will likely be fiercer before the finish. We've not an ounce of power in reserve, Dr. Bastable. Just a bit more wind and we are done. The skipper has sent me for your permission to cut the rope."

"I can't give it! I can't!" declared the scientist stoutly. "I can't give it whilst we have an atom of hope of weathering the gale. Go back to the bridge, Mr. Allen. Go back and tell Captain Trevallen that I will come and watch with him. We must save the crew of the brig if we can."

Tom Allen saluted and made his way back to the bridge. Dr. Bastable thought for a second or so and then turned swiftly to Joan and Roger.

"You two must keep watch," he commanded. "Directly the Golden Ray disappears do your utmost to get in touch with the *Sandonah* again. Give her our position —you will find it on the slate there—and beg her to hurry. If we are still hanging on to the brig, if we are all still alive in half an hour, I will send Johnny Dark to relieve you."

With that he went from the wireless cabin and fought his way through the yelling gale to the bridge, where he would stand by the side of the skipper and help him fight the fierce fury of the storm. It was, indeed, a terrible situation for him. On his decision rested the lives of the crew of the disabled brig and perhaps the lives of his daughter, his nephew, and the crew of the *Radio* as well. To make a mistake would be the easiest thing in the world. He might give the order to cut the rope and then, within a few minutes, the full fury of the storm might abate. Even if it did, nothing could save the brig if she was abandoned. On the other hand, if he did not cut the tow rope, both yacht and brig might go to the bottom. Had his own life been the only one on the *Radio* in danger, Dr. Bastable would not have hesitated. He would have hung on to the brig and pulled her to safety or perished with the other. He had to think of others. The whole responsibility for many lives rested on his shoulders

In the wireless cabin Joan and Roger stared at one another with scared and anxious faces.

"You watch the aerial, Roger," said Joan, with quick decision. "I will be ready at the key to call immediately the wire is clear. That will be best, I think. You are becoming quite good at Morse, but I am more used to it. Getting in touch again may be a ticklish job. Oh, I do hope father won't have to cut the rope!"

Roger nodded gravely and took up his position at a porthole, from which he could see a portion of the aerial wire, sufficient to tell him if the ray had disappeared. He had to cling on tightly, for the little yacht was pitching and tossing tremendously. He felt rather sick and miserable, for the constant heaving was beginning to upset him.

"But I can't be ill now. I won't!" he told himself, with grim determination, and tried to concentrate his mind on the job of watching the glowing wires, despite the nausea that threatened to overcome him.

He watched and watched as minute after minute went by and still the Golden Ray flickered along the wires, now glowing brightly and now fading away until it was hardly visible. Once, indeed, he thought it had gone, but it was only a wave of sickness that had all but overpowered him, making him almost blind for the moment.

"I can't be ill! I will not!" he said again, and braced himself anew against the ever-growing frenzy of the labouring yacht. He had no time to be frightened for his own life. Indeed, any fear adequate to the dreadful situation must have altogether prostrated him. He only knew that he had a job to do, a small one, perhaps, and that he must do it, no matter what happened.

Suddenly the *Radio* gave a fearful pitch and all but flung him to deck. He heard a cry of pain from Joan, and turned to see that she was gripping tightly with the fingers of her left hand round her right wrist. Her face was white and drawn with pain.

"Sprained my wrist," she said tersely. "Tried to save myself from being pitched out of the chair, and twisted it. Here, you take the key. I can't work it now."

Roger gave a last look at the aerial and then leaped with a shout to the wireless instruments.

"The ray has gone, really gone this time!" he cried. "Out of that chair, Joan, old thing. Quick!"

Joan rose and opened her lips as though to speak. Then, with a little moan, she reeled and fainted dead away with the pain of her hurt wrist. Roger caught her just in time, and slipped her gently to the deck of the cabin. He had no time to attend to her then, though he was wild with anxiety for her. He jambed the head-'phones over his ears and threw over the switch of the transmitter and started to call the United States cruiser.

Again and again he sent the little flame of sparks crashing across the aluminium points of the instrument, sending out their own call and then that of the *Sandonah*, according to the regulations for wireless communication. After very few calls he switched in the receiver, but he could hear nothing, not a single dot or dash to signify that his call had been heard. There was only the constant crash of "statics," those untamed signals that come from Nature's all-powerful transmitter, the enormous lightning flash.

Again and again and again he called into the void, sending out his dots and dashes with well-spaced regularity, as he had been taught by Joan and Johnny Sparks and Dr. Bastable. And then, at last, he picked up his answer. To his joy he read the call sign of the *Sandonah* and then that of the *Radio*. Yes, he had got into touch again! Then came a mysterious group of letters. He was altogether at a loss to understand them until he remembered the code which is used to save time in signalling. "QRM" he read. "You are disturbed" or "Am I disturbed?"

"That will mean the 'statics,'" he thought, and then, because he could read the cruiser's signals quite well, he sent another little code group, "QSA," which means "You are coming through very well."

"'QSA, OM, QSA.' Go ahead," signalled the *Sandonah*, and it almost seemed to him that her operator was laughing, knowing him for a beginner. Roger didn't care, though. In any case the *Sandonah's* operator had called him "OM," short for the friendly "old man." He sent his message, giving their position and begging the cruiser to hurry to their assistance. "Am only about twenty-five miles away. Will be up in about forty minutes," came the answer. "Hang on to your tow if you possibly can. Weather is bettering."

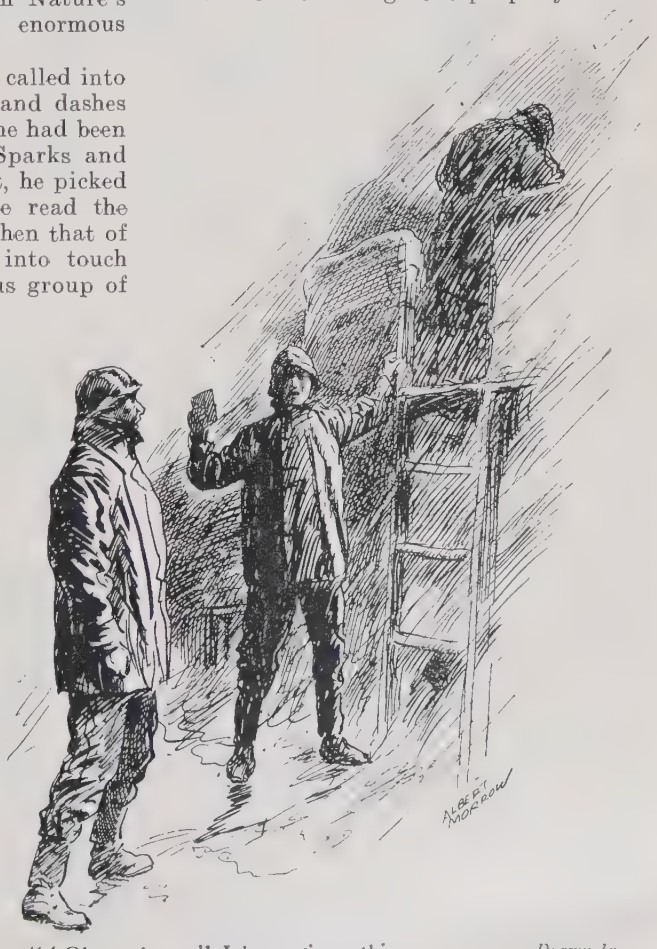
Roger felt like crying, he was so delighted. His sickness had gone in his excitement. He gave the cruiser "OK" and then turned to Joan. He found her come round again, though she was still on the floor where he had put her. She sat up as he looked down at her, and tried to rise.

"Stop where you are, Joan, old thing," he told her. "Is your wrist very bad?"

"No! Silly of me to go off like that," said Joan, a little crossly. "What is it, Roger? Have you got in touch again?"

"Yes," said Roger, and told her his good news. "I'm just going to tell uncle," he added. "You'll be all right here for a bit, won't you?"

"Write the message out properly on the



"'Oh, wait until I have given this message to uncle, Mr. Allen'" (p. 164)

Drawn by Albert Morrow

pad, Roger," Joan directed. "Yes, I am all right now. Write out the message and take it up to the bridge properly. I'll wait here until you come back, then I'll go and get my wrist bound up. I don't think it is very bad."

"You're a good plucked 'un, Joan," said Roger, who could see that despite her protestations she was still in considerable pain and that her wrist was swelling badly. "All right, I'll do things as they should be done."

He wrote out the message on a proper form and started off to take it to his uncle on the bridge. He had to fight every inch of the short distance from the wireless cabin to the bridge because, in spite of the *Sandonah's* assurance that the storm was decreasing, it seemed to be worse than it had been at any time.

When he reached the bridge ladder he found Tom Allen, who had just slid down to the deck.

"Going to have the rope cut!" yelled the mate. "It's got to be done, though it is death for those poor fellows back yonder."

"But you mustn't! You mustn't!" shouted Roger. "The *Sandonah* will be up with us in half an hour now. She says that the storm is breaking—soon be over. Oh, wait until I have given this message to uncle, Mr. Allen."

"All right!" cried the mate, after a moment's hesitation. He was as keen as anyone to hang on to the tow, and there seemed a ghost of a chance that they might be able to do it. He cast a weatherwise eye around him and saw signs hidden from Roger that told him that the United States ship was right and that the storm had reached its worst.

Roger scrambled up the ladder to the bridge and shoved his wet and nearly pulped message pad into his uncle's hand. At the same time he shouted the contents, for he could see that there would be difficulty in reading what he had written.

"Jump down and stop Allen from cutting the rope, Roger," cried Dr. Bastable, his strained face relaxing into a smile. "We'll take a chance. I believe we can do it yet! I believe we can hang on for another half-hour."

Roger screamed into his uncle's ear again, striving to make him understand, above the roaring of the wind and waves, that Tom Allen was still waiting for further orders at the foot of the ladder. At that moment the mate appeared on the bridge again. He had come up to find out what he was to do. The scientist signalled to him, with a wave of his hand, to stay where he was for a bit longer.

"Yes, I believe we can do it!" shouted Captain Trevallen, crouching in the shelter of the canvas "dodger" so that his voice might be the better heard.

And do it they did. The *Sandonah* came up at last, at least five minutes before they expected to see her. She stood by them for a couple of hours until the lessening storm had moderated sufficiently to enable her brave crew to take over the tow from the battered yacht. Then she steamed off, taking the brig with her. As she went the tired but happy complement of the yacht could see hands and rags of bunting being waved to them from the brig. Her crew would never forget that but for the pluck of those on the tiny yacht they would have lost ship and lives and all.

And then, when the warship and her tow were out of sight, Johnny Sparks, on duty in the wireless cabin, picked up a message. It was from the *Sandonah*.

"Well done, little *Radio!* Will report your splendid act both sides Atlantic. Good luck!"

CHAPTER V

Mutiny!

Bob Salters and Baptiste, the French boy, were having a gorgeous time of it. They had been told to clean up the wireless room and had done so under the direction of Johnny Sparks. Now, Bob Salters had the ordinary crystal receiving-set, which was used for everyday reception of spark signals, in pieces on the work bench, and was carefully cleaning it, whilst he explained to Baptiste how it worked and what each part was for.

A curious friendship had sprung up between these two youngsters, a friendship which had had its beginning in the knowledge that they had been both saved from death through the timely appearance of the little *Radio*. Already Bob was beginning to speak a few words of French and the English of Baptiste was improving fast. It was curious to hear them talking, because more often than not Baptiste would speak in his curious English and Bob would try to answer in even more curious

French. They seemed to understand one another, but it was impossible for anyone else to know what they were getting at more than half the time.

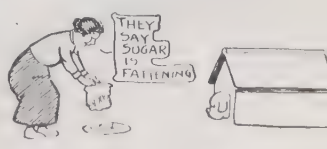
They shared a little cubby-hole amidships, behind the wireless cabin. The mate, Tom Allen, who was something of a carpenter, had cleared it for them, with the aid of the crew, and had fitted up a couple of bunks. Bob Salters did odd jobs to help the cook and also was entrusted with keeping things in the wireless cabin in order. Baptiste, who was a really good sailor, despite his youth, ran messages for the captain and the mate, took his trick at the wheel, and made himself useful generally about the deck. He told Joan one day that he "had never been happier in his life."

"'Get back into that cabin, every man of you,' he ordered" (p. 167)

The thorough cleaning up and overhaul in the wireless cabin had been rendered necessary by the tremendous buffeting which the yacht had had during the storm. Most of the delicate instruments that Dr. Bastable required for his experimental work had come safely through the racket because they were snugly housed on special shelves; but a great deal of damage had been done to more ordinary material, and Bob Salters was delighted when he was given the chance to try and repair some of it.

It was Johnny Sparks who had suggested that he should try his hand at running over the crystal reception gear, and Dr. Bastable, knowing that Bob was really clever with his fingers, had willingly consented. Meanwhile, Sparks had taken into use one of the big valve sets which the scientist used for long-distance reception. Johnny Sparks thoroughly enjoyed using this delicate and far-ranging apparatus. It seemed to him far more fun that just listening to ships' sparks hour after hour when he was on watch. He had just amused himself by getting the time signals from the great station at Bordeaux, in France. So that the other two could hear he had put them through the loud speaker.

"Wonderful things, these time signals," he told Bob and Baptiste. "The French started 'em. Used to buzz 'em out from the Eiffel Tower in 1909 when wireless was quite a baby, so to speak. Now there are some two dozen or so stations which transmit them. Most of 'em are low power and only good for local reception. Some of 'em, like Eiffel Tower, and Bordeaux and Lyons and Nauen—German, that is—and Annapolis, in the United States, can be



heard half round the world, though. The big ones, like those you have been hearing from LY—Bordeaux—are sent out automatically from the pendulum of a clock. The pendulum beats seconds, and at every second it makes a click with an electric trigger thing. The electric trigger thing works the transmitter just like a sending key, and so we get dead accurate time even when we are in the middle of the ocean."

"But how is eet zat you do not get zem all mixed up, Meester Sparks?" asked Baptiste. "Why is eet not zat zay all come togesser to you, from all ze stations?"

"Because they send at different times, stupid," answered Johnny Sparks, with a laugh. "But you are right, there would be a fine mix up with the high-power stations if they did all send out at the same time. You see, they are only correct to about a hundredth of a second, and they would all jumble up together beautifully. No, Baptiste, my friend, it is all arranged very well. Bordeaux, for instance, sends out at eight o'clock Greenwich time. See, it is now ten past eight at Greenwich."

He looked up as he spoke at the two dials on the wall over the operating-table. One of these dials showed Greenwich mean time and the other the local time. As the *Radio* was now in the Western Atlantic, this local time was three hours short of Greenwich. Next day, if they continued to make the progress they were then making, the local clock would be altered to show four hours slow from Greenwich. This is because the time is now arranged in "zones" to save altering local time on ships every day.

"Well, I suppose I must get back on to the 600-metre band," said Johnny Sparks, meaning thereby that he thought it time that he attended to his real business, which was listening-in on the wave length allotted to ships, in case the *Radio* was called up by anyone.

He shifted his coils and turned the tuning handles. Suddenly he laughed and switched on the amplifying valves and the loud speaker again.

"Went too low," he explained. "Listen to what I have found. Some broadcasting station most likely. An afternoon transmission from one of the Yankee fellows, I expect."

The wireless cabin was filled with the sound of a splendid orchestra playing. It was so clear and sweet that it might have been only a dozen or so yards away from them. In awed silence they heard it to the end. Then came a voice:

"Hallo! 5NO, the Newcastle Station, calling. In one minute the band of His Majesty's Grenadier Guards will play Listz's Second Hungarian Rhapsody."

"Great Scot! Newcastle! My home town! If this isn't wonderful. Here, Bob, buzz off quick and tell Dr. Bastable. And fetch Miss Joan and Roger. I bet they wouldn't miss this for worlds. This is absolutely wonderful!"

Bob "buzzed off" as he had been bidden and quickly returned with Joan and Roger on the run. Dr. Bastable didn't run, but he came along the deck very fast.

They heard the item through, and then Dr. Bastable tuned in on the transmission from London. To the delight of Joan and Roger they heard the well-known voice of "John Henry" telling one of his droll stories.

"Ask Mr. Allen to tell any of the crew who care to come along that we are having a little concert," Dr. Bastable told Bob. But Baptiste was out of the cabin first.

"I will take ze message, sir," he said. "Ze man at ze wheel, maybe he like to hear from hees own country ze music. I, me, Baptiste will take his trick for him."

"Good fellow! Run along, then," said Dr. Bastable, and off Baptiste went. Very soon all but three of the deck hands came crowding to the door of the cabin, entering at the invitation of the "owner."

"Smith and Grumbles, they wouldn't come," said one of the men. "But save them and the look-out we're all here, thanking you kindly, sir."

"Well, sit down and enjoy yourselves, men," said Dr. Bastable. "This is rather out of the ordinary, you know. There must be something exceptional about the reception conditions. Unless anything goes wrong we shall hear, at half-past nine Greenwich time—that is half-past six here, you know—the chimes from Big Ben, in London. Wonderful! Wonderful!"

If Dr. Bastable thought it wonderful, the men were even more impressed. They roared at "John Henry's" jokes and beat time with hands and feet at the music which followed, and listened so quietly to a lady singing that you could tell they were enjoying every minute of the wonderful concert that had suddenly come to them through a thousand miles and more of space.

Then came the great moment, when one of the London "Uncles" announced that in less than half a minute they would hear the "time signal from Big Ben, broadcast to all stations." Then came the well-known Westminster chimes, sounding loud and clear above the throbbing of the twin engines that were urging the little *Radio* deeper and deeper into the mysteries of the great Sargasso Sea.

"And that's that!" said Dr. Bastable. "I think we'll close down for the night now, unless any of you would like to hear the news from London. Aha! I can see that you all would. Very well, then, we will carry on a bit longer. I must call up Marconi House and tell them about this. They will be mightily pleased, I'll be bound."

But that news from London was never heard by the crew of the *Radio*, for the announcer had hardly finished that bit about "Reuter, Press Association, Exchange Telegraph and Central News," which he always says at the beginning of the news, when there was a shrill shout from aft. It was Baptiste, yelling at the top of his voice.

"Mutiny! Mutiny! Queek, or zay take ze sheep!" he cried.

The crew tumbled out of the wireless cabin, to be confronted by the evil face of the man known as "Grumbles." In his hand he carried a big revolver, with which he threatened them menacingly. "Back! Get back into that cabin, every man of you!" he ordered. "Me and my mate Smith are in charge now. We don't like the way things is carried on in this craft and we means to run 'em to please ourselves. If you don't make no trouble no one won't be 'urt. If anyone tries any funny games I shoot him like a dog. D'ye get me? Oh, an' there's something else. If anyone likes to join me and Smith let him step forward and say so. If not, get back into the wireless cabin and stay there. It's no use trying to call up for help, because Smith is going to cut that there wire now. D'ye see?"

There was a moment of silence and then Dr. Bastable spoke.

"Don't be a fool, man," he said. "If you have any real fault to find with the way things are run on this yacht, out with it. You know me, or ought to, by this time. I have a name for fairness, I hope, but I will not stand any nonsense. What do you and Smith think you can do by yourselves? You cannot run the yacht without help. I see that you have fastened down the engine-room hatch; but directly the engineers find out that things are wrong they will stop the engines and we shall drift and drift until we are sighted by some vessel which will promptly put an end to your little game, whatever it is."

"Full-rigged ship right ahead!" cried Baptiste, who was still clinging to the wheel and steering the yacht, though he had seen Tom Allen knocked down and tied up and knew that Captain Trevallen had been locked into his cabin, where he had been asleep at the time of the outrage.

"I told you so," said Dr. Bastable, with a smile. "Now put down that gun like a sensible fellow and tell me what your trouble is. I will not hold this idiocy against you if I find that you have a real grievance."

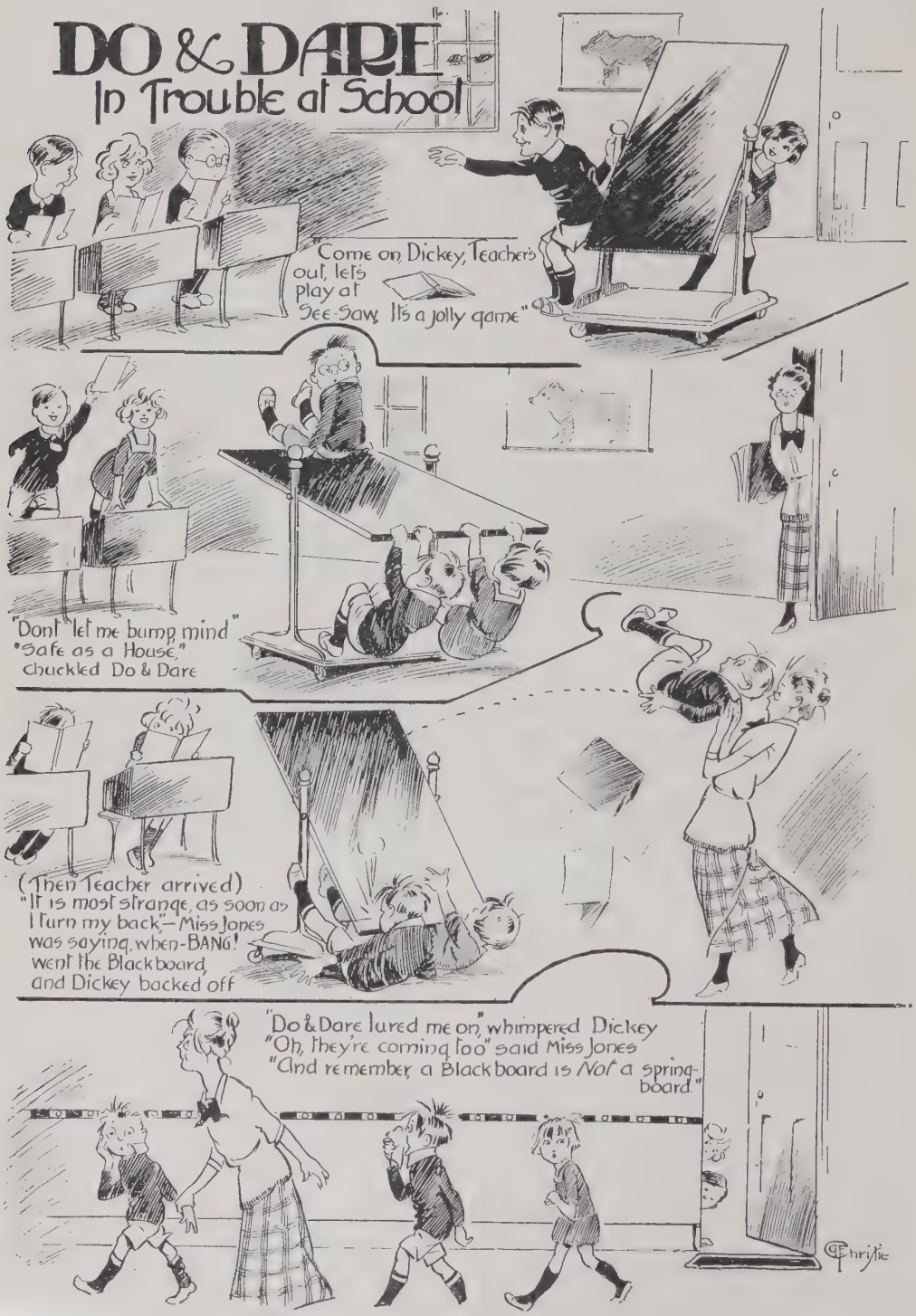
"Me and Smith don't like this here bargeing about from place to place," said Grumbles sulkily. "And we didn't ship to do no towing without any share in the salvage money. It's all very well for you, boss. You are a rich man and can afford to chuck away good money, but you ought to think of us poor sailormen. We mean to run this here craft somewhere where we can nip ashore. Then you can carry on in your own silly way without us."

Then there was another wild yell from Baptiste. He had been quietly adjusting matters at the wheel so that he could lash the helm with rope-ends and come to the assistance of Dr. Bastable and the others. He had just made things fast, to his satisfaction, when he saw Smith climbing up on to the roof of the wireless cabin to cut the aerial lead-in. With a shout he charged along the deck to stop the man.

Grumbles, thinking that he was about to be attacked from the rear, turned and fired wildly. At the same moment a small, dark object hurtled through the door of the wireless cabin.

Joan, who had been waiting her chance, had hurled, with all her strength, a leaden paper-weight. She had used her left hand, but she could throw with either. The weight caught Grumbles on the side of the head. He gave one yelp and pitched to the deck. Then the crew rushed out of the cabin, and, at the same moment, Smith leaped from the top of the cabin and wrested the revolver from his mate's hand.

(To be continued)


DO & DARE
In Trouble at School
"Come on, Dickey, Teacher's out, let's play at See-Saw. It's a jolly game"
"Dont let me bump mind" "Safe as a House," chuckled Do & Dare
(Then Teacher arrived) "It is most strange, as soon as I turn my back,"—Miss Jones was saying, when—BANG! went the Blackboard, and Dickey backed off
"Do & Dare lured me on," whimpered Dickey "Oh, they're coming too" said Miss Jones "And remember, a Blackboard is Not a spring-board."
G.E. Thrift

THE ADVENTURES of BINGO DOG

By CONSTANCE EGAN

NO. 3.– THE BARGE AND THE BURGLAR

IT didn't take Bingo Dog long to find out all about the barge he and Tishy were on.

He soon found it was a big boat with one teeny weeny cabin one end of it—the rest was all coal.

There were the bargee and his wife, a boy called Jo, a baby girl called Esther-Mary, and a long-clothes infant called Biby. And they all slept and had their meals in that stuffy little cabin.

Tishy, the little green lizard, loved it because it was hot. (You remember he came from India.) He hid behind the stove and slept and slept till he was hungry. Then he awoke, crept from his hiding-place and looked around him.

The baby was asleep in its cot, which was really a wash-basket, and Esther-Mary was sitting on the floor eating bread-and-milk from a saucer. Tishy's bright little eyes spied the bread-and-milk, and he crawled towards it. Next minute he was making a very good meal, while Esther-Mary lifted her voice and yelled.

"Stop that noise, young Esther," called her mother, who was steering the barge, whilst her husband sat on the edge of the boat and smoked his pipe.

Esther-Mary howled louder than ever.

"She'll wake Biby with that noise," said her mother. She gave the tiller into her husband's hands and went into the little cabin. Tishy scuttled away: he was rather afraid of the harsh-voiced woman; besides, the bread-and-milk was finished.

"Now what's the matter with you?"

Esther-Mary stopped yelling. "Mum, mum!" she cried. And that's about as far as she had got with learning to talk, so of course she couldn't tell about naughty Tishy.

"There, there!" soothed the mother, and she gave Esther-Mary a large wooden spoon to play with.

Esther-Mary beat the wooden spoon on an empty tin. Biby woke up and started to cry. The bargee yelled for his wife. The kettle boiled over.

"Wotter life!" said the woman. She took the kettle off the stove, lulled the baby to sleep again, and went out to her husband.

"That woman's got too much to do," thought Bingo Dog. "I'll see if I can keep the kids quiet for her," and he trotted into the little cabin.

Esther-Mary crowed with delight. She pulled Bingo's tail and whacked him cheerily with the wooden spoon. Bingo Dog put up with it all like a lamb, because the baby seemed very pleased and fond of him. So everyone was happy again.

The woman steered the barge and sang in a queer cracked voice something about her Sailor Boy. The bargee smoked his pipe and read a very dirty newspaper. Jo, whittling a stick, plodded along by the side of the old mare on the path; Biby slept like a little angel; Esther-Mary played with

"Bingo hung on to the man, growling and barking fiercely"

Bingo Dog and Tishy the lizard crept out from his hiding-place.

"Aren't we lucky to have found a home so soon?" said Bingo Dog. "But it's rather stuffy in here. I'm going outside to have a breather. It's jolly running along the top of the coal."

"May be all right for you," said Tishy, "but I like it better in here. It's warmer. You go outside, noble Bingo; I'll look after the kids."

"Right-oh, old top!" cried Bingo, and he trotted out of the cabin, jumped on to its little roof, and so ran along the top of the coal piled up in the barge.

"Hello, long tail!" he barked cheerily to the old mare.

Now, when Bingo Dog left the cabin Esther-Mary had nothing to play with. She was tired of the old wooden spoon and flung it from her. She looked round for something to do. On the tiny table were the remains of dinner, a tin of treacle, a piece of roly-poly pudding, plates, cups and saucers, and spoons.

Esther-Mary, sitting on the floor, suddenly thought she would like to explore. She was very unsteady on her legs, and tried to pull herself up by hanging on to the tablecloth. You can guess what happened. Esther-Mary sat down again very suddenly, and down came the pudding and treacle, cups and saucers, plates, and cloth and all. She was too taken aback to cry, and when she found a piece of pudding in her lap she started eating it.

The tin of treacle lay on its side on the floor, treacle oozing thickly from it!

Tishy loved treacle. So did Esther-Mary. Soon they were both wallowing in it, Esther-Mary dipping her fat fingers in the sticky mess and then licking them; Tishy with nose and all four feet in it—his table manners were not of the best, but this was *under* the table, you see, so perhaps he thought it wouldn't matter.

Until this moment Esther-Mary hadn't even noticed Tishy. She had been so surprised at the wonder of just holding on to a cloth and finding pudding and treacle at her feet, that

she simply hadn't seen him. Now she gazed at him with wide blue eyes. But she did not cry, although he had frightened her so when he had taken her bread-and-milk; instead she stroked him with her fat sticky little hand.

Esther-Mary and Tishy were completely happy when Biby woke up and gave a scream. Some babies make a habit of screaming as soon as they wake. Biby was one of them.

They were through the lock now, and the bargee and his wife were back in their places again.

"There's that Biby again," said the woman; "she tells yer when she wants anythink, don't she?" And she went into the cabin.

First she tripped over a spoon, then she fell over the pudding dish, then she began to scold Esther-Mary sitting there amongst the broken and sticky things. And *then* she discovered Tishy, the little green lizard.

"Oow!" she screamed. The bargee came to see what was the matter, Bingo Dog danced along behind him.

"There's a young crocodile here," cried the woman, pointing to Tishy, who was too full of treacle to run away.

The man looked closer.

"That ain't no croc, that's a lizard," said he slowly.

"Well, take it away, can't you?" cried the woman. She didn't seem to like poor Tishy one little bit.

The man stooped, picked Tishy up, carried him outside, and flung him overboard into the canal.

With an angry bark Bingo jumped into the water, caught Tishy before he sank, and swam with him to the bank.

"They'd throw you away, would they?" he growled, as he shook the water from his coat; "then they shan't have *me!*"

"Catch that dog," called the man to Jo. Jo made a grab at Bingo, but

"Bingo jumped into the water and caught Tishy before he sank"

Drawn by Harry Rountree

Bingo was too quick. He picked up Tishy again, and dashed through the hedge and away across the fields. Of course, Jo couldn't follow. So the barge and the old mare went on their way, and Bingo and Tishy were still seeking their fortune and a home.

"After all, it was a bit cramped on that barge," said Bingo. "I like to be free to run about, I do."

"But it was nice and hot," murmured Tishy, "and there was treacle all over the floor."

"That was only an accident," exclaimed Bingo; "you wouldn't find treacle on the floor every day. Besides, they wouldn't have you—they threw you overboard."

"Yeth, motht noble Bingo, and you thaved my life," lisped Tishy chokily. He was so overcome by the bravery of

Bingo that he had again forgotten how you pronounce the letter " s."

" That's all right," barked Bingo airily; " I'm glad we left them, jolly glad." And he scampered away over the fields, so that Tishy thought he'd be left behind and forgotten, but Bingo Dog always returned for his little friend.

They came to an orchard. Here Tishy had a wonderful time, for he loved fruit. Bingo didn't *eat* apples, he only played with them. And when he was tired of playing he left Tishy in the orchard and went foraging for himself.

" You wait here, Tishy, and don't over-eat yourself," he said. " I'll be back later."

Bingo Dog was quite successful in his efforts to get a meal. He sat by the open door of a lodge, put his head on one side and gave that " please-I'm-so-hungry " look. The kind lodge-keeper came and patted him, called him " good dog," and gave him some scraps, a saucer of milk and two Marie biscuits.

Then she said: " Now run away, doggie," just when Bingo was beginning to think she might like to adopt him. However, apparently she didn't want him, so he licked the biscuit crumbs from his lips, said, " Woof, woof," which clearly meant " Thank you," and trotted back to the orchard and Tishy.

That night the dog and the lizard came to a large mansion standing in a beautiful park.

" We might find somewhere to sleep around here," said Bingo.

He was nosing round the outside of the house when suddenly he came across a man, climbing stealthily in at one of the windows.

Now the people at Laburnam Cottage who had once been Bingo's master and mistress had said that Bingo-dog was no good as a watch dog, but he had learnt enough of the watch-dog business to know that when you see or hear a man getting in at a window the first thing you do is to bark your loudest, then if possible you catch hold of the man by his coat or trousers, and hang on till someone comes.

So Bingo barked his very loudest. The man started, dropped from the window sill, prepared for flight, but was caught by the back of his coat by Bingo the overgrown mongrel.

Bingo hung on to the man, growling and barking fiercely. Next minute there was a banging of doors in the house, lights were turned on, and various people, clad in their night things, appeared on the scene.

The master of the house caught the burglar, 'phoned for the police, and gave the man in charge. Then he turned to Bingo.

" Good heavens ! " he cried. " Why, it isn't Scamp at all. It's a perfectly strange animal."

" Very strange ! " murmured the butler, looking at Bingo's queer appearance; " a mongrel I should say, sir."

" But a jolly fine watch dog all the same," continued the master. " Make him comfortable for the night, and we'll see if we can find the owner in the morning. If not, I should like to keep that dog."

Bingo wagged his long tail with delight. Surely his fortune was made now ! This was a regular palace of a place, and the owner of the palace wanted him !

The under-footman took him to the kitchen, and gave him a blanket to sleep on, in front of the dying fire. It was warm and cosy and delightful. Bingo the hero curled up happily. That hero feeling is very, very nice, specially when you're only an overgrown mongrel dog. In two minutes he was asleep, dreaming of burglars and rabbits and mutton-chop bones.

And what of Tishy ? Well, Tishy was as happy and comfortable as Bingo, for he had found his way into a lovely warm conservatory.

" Clever Bingo," he murmured sleepily, " this is the best place I have struck since I left India."

Little Folks Nature Club

Conducted by "Squirrel"

Photo: M. H Crawford

The Water Scorpion is sometimes quite indistinguishable from dead leaves and twigs at the bottom of a pond

THERE are two ways of finding out what happens in a pond. One is to sit down on the bank and watch what its inhabitants are doing whether on the surface or underneath it. If the water is clear you will be astonished at the number and variety of the creatures that live in it. But if it is muddy, or if the bottom is overgrown with weeds, or if the surface is covered with a green sheet of duckweed, you will see very little and you will never guess half the secrets that are hidden in it.

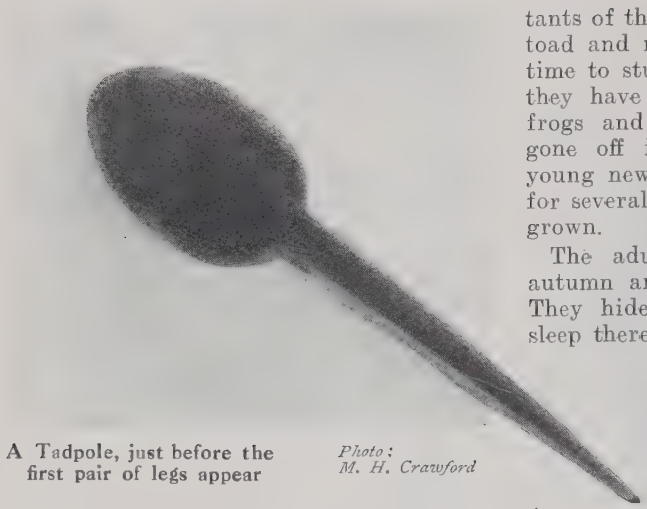
Make Your Own Aquarium

The other way is to have an aquarium, so that you may bring the various pond creatures home and watch them living their lives there from day to day. For this purpose it is not necessary to buy an expensive glass tank. In fact it is best not to keep pond dwellers in such a thing, because in their natural home they are not used to having light shining on them from all sides but only from above.

All that is Necessary

All you need is an old tub or earthenware trough, and one or two basins or bowls or jars. You must have more than one receptacle, because it is not possible in a small space to keep together all the creatures you may take from the same pond; for some of them live by preying on others, and when those others have no means of escape they are very soon eaten up, and then you have to begin all over again. So it is best to keep the flesh-eaters in one tank and the vegetable-eaters in another, and the smaller creatures of each kind in still others. And in each tank you should have some water plants growing because they keep the water sweet and healthy. So at the bottom there should be a layer of sand in which they can take root, and in the tank in which you keep tadpoles of frogs or newts you should place one or two stones which are large enough to rise above the surface, so that when the creatures get their legs and their lungs they may come out of the water to rest whenever they wish.

Always remember that before you bring pond dwellers home you must have a suitable place ready to receive them. When you have made all necessary preparations



A Tadpole, just before the first pair of legs appear *Photo: M. H. Crawford*

for them, you may set forth with a pond net, with which to make your captures, and a water-tight tin in which to carry them. The net should be a round bag of strong muslin, about three or four inches deep, and attached to a circle of stout wire which should be securely fixed into a long, firm handle.

Armed with this you may easily capture the insects on the surface of the water and the other creatures that are swimming freely underneath, by slipping it gently below them and then raising it suddenly.

Search Among the Weeds

You will find it well worth while also to push it among the water weeds, searching their stems and leaves with its wire rim for animals that are feeding or clinging there. It is a good plan to bring a quantity of the water plants ashore and then to examine them bit by bit for specimens.

Finally, when you have collected all you can in this way, you should dig or drag with your net among the mud at the bottom for the various creatures that lie hidden among it. All except fish may be taken home without water provided you let them lie among some wet water-weed.

Study the Tadpole

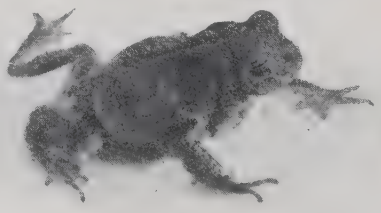
The most interesting of all the inhabitants of the pond are the tadpoles of frog, toad and newt. Spring, of course, is the time to study them. By the end of June they have all grown up, and the young frogs and newts have come ashore and gone off in search of adventures. The young newts will not return to the water for several years, that is, till they are full grown.

The adults remain in the pond till autumn and then they also come ashore. They hide themselves in some hole and sleep there all winter, but when they wake up again in spring they repair at once to the water to breed. The young frogs do not desert the water entirely, but are ready to resort to it at any moment either for protection or in warm weather to moisten their skin.

The Stickleback as a Pet

The tiny sticklebacks make delightful pets. They are easily caught, too, and soon make themselves at home in an aquarium. But they are very fierce little fish and will attack not only other creatures in the tank, even larger fish than themselves, but also each other. So unless you have a very roomy tank you will find it best to keep only one pair at a time.

If you take them now you may perhaps be able to keep them through the winter, and then in early summer you will have the pleasure of watching their wonderful nesting habits. The male builds a little round nest of water-weed. In this the female lays her eggs, and then the male takes charge, fighting and driving off any other creature that may come too near, until the young are hatched.



A young Toad that has just lost its tail (*Photo: M. H. Crawford*)

Whirligig Beetles

It is amusing to watch the antics of the whirligig beetles and other insects that spend so much of their time playing on the very surface of the pond. This surface consists of a very thin film, and you will notice that wherever these tiny creatures go on it they never break it but only dimple it with the pressure of their feet.

If you startle them, however, they will

plunge through it and dive to the bottom of the pond in a twinkling. Their bodies are burnished blue-black and sparkle in the sun as they whirl about, but when they dive you will notice a little silvery ball at the tail. This is a bubble of air. In order to breathe when it is under the water the beetle has to carry air with it, and it does this in a space under its wing-cases, but a little always protrudes.

The Large Water Beetle

This is also the method of the large water beetle known as *Dytiscus*. He is about an inch long, and has a brown back with yellow margins. He does not play about on the surface like the whirligig, but comes there every now and again to renew his supply of air. He swims up, pops his tail through the film and fills his air tank, then goes off again into the depths of the pond in search of prey, which may be any living creature that may happen to cross his path.

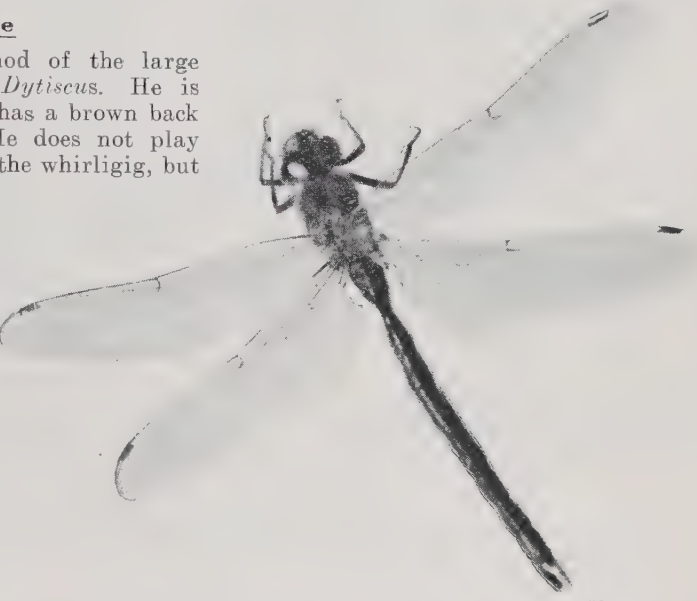
A Fierce and Voracious Creature

At the same time you may see another very different creature acting in a similar way. It is long and narrow and has a broad flat head which is armed with two curved nippers. In colour it is like the mud at the bottom of the pond, so when resting there it is not easily distinguished. This is the larva of *Dytiscus*. It is very fierce and voracious, and will attack any creature, large or small, but, unlike the adult beetle, it does not go in search of them. Instead it lies hidden till some other inhabitant of the pond comes within its reach. Then it seizes its prey with its nippers and, piercing its body with them, sucks the juice from it.

When it reaches its full size this larva climbs out of the water, buries itself in a hole in the bank and there turns into a pupa. The perfect beetle emerges in a week or two and at once makes for the water. But besides being able to live in water and on land, it has a very useful pair of wings, and often at night it rises from the pond and flies off in search of new quarters. So if you wish to keep water beetles in an aquarium you must be careful to cover the top with gauze which will allow light and air to pass through to the water and prevent would-be wanderers from escaping.

Another Interesting Pond Dweller

The water-boatman is another very interesting and common pond dweller. He gets his name from the fact that his back is shaped like the keel of a boat, and, curiously enough, he swims on his back. The lower part of his body looks silvery, but this is because it is covered with hairs which carry the supply of air which the boatman must take with him so long as he remains under water.



The Dragonfly, one of the most interesting creatures that live in ponds

Photo: M. H. Crawford

This he is unable to do without exerting himself, for he is so light that if he were to stop paddling for a moment he would bob up to the surface like a cork. So when he wishes to rest he must take hold of some water-weed, which he does with his front and middle pairs of legs. These legs are short, but his hind legs are long and powerful and hairy, and make excellent oars.

The Water Spider

The water spider must also carry air with her into the depths of the pond where she spends most of her life, but she is much cleverer in the use of it than any of her

neighbours. Her body is covered with fine hairs which form a watertight coat. Air collects under these hairs, and so when she dives she looks like a silver ball. You will notice that she has considerable difficulty in swimming down, because the air naturally tends to rise and draw her with it.

Watch where she goes, and where she stops you will see attached to the waterweed a little tent like a silver thimble. This is just a silken net like the webs of other spiders, but it is woven so closely that it retains air like a balloon. So when the spider wishes to remain some time under water she makes a number of trips to the surface, taking down a supply of air each time and releasing it inside the tent. Then with her home full of fresh air, she can sit or sleep in it till it is time to fetch a new supply.

The silken threads of this tent are so fine that, when it is first made in an aquarium, you cannot see them till the spider begins to fill her den with air.

The Interesting Dragonfly

One of the greatest events of pond life is the appearance of the dragonfly. For about a year the larva of the dragonfly spends its time under water, catching and devouring its prey by means of a wonderful underlip which it throws out like a great arm to grasp them. And all this time it breathes by drawing in and expelling water instead of air. But when it is full grown it climbs up a rush or reed or other water plant right out of the water. There it remains quite still for a time, and then its skin hardens and splits.

Struggling Out of its Covering

If you are lucky enough to see it at this moment you may watch the perfect insect struggling out of its old covering. At first its wings are short and useless, but when the insect has rested a moment or two it pours a green juice into them, and they quickly grow to their full size. Before long they dry and harden, and then the wonderful insect sails away on its first air voyage. These are only a few of the many interesting creatures that live in our ponds. While you are searching for them you will come upon many others, and with care you will be able to keep and study them all from time to time in your aquarium.

The One-horse Shay

Billie and Betty went riding one day
In an apple cart drawn by their One-Horse grey.
Said Billie, "I'm thinking we'll ride to the sea."
Said Betty, "Oh, Billie, that plan will suit me."

Apples and apples went rolling about,
For grey One-Horse had shied when the first one fell out.
Said Billie, "I'm thinking I'll give him the whip."
Said Betty, "Oh, Billie, not more than a flip!"

Billie gave One-Horse a terrible clap,
And the jerk that it made threw him out of the trap.
Said Betty, "I'm thinking we won't reach the sea!"
Said One-Horse, "Oh, Billie, how could you hit me?"

Betty found Billie and scolded him well,
And when she got tired One-Horse had a spell.
Said Billie, "I'm thinking you can't say much more!"
Said One-Horse, "Oh, Billie, I'm dreadfully sore!"

Still they patched up their quarrel and went on their way,
And their cart full of apples may pass any day,
So keep your eyes open for One-Horse shay.

M. G. SHIELDS.

Winning her Colours

By CHRISTINE CHAUNDLER

CHAPTER VII

Wangling Out of it

"YOU'RE quite sure it was all right up to the time when you went to the orchestra meeting?" Christabel Collier said.

"Absolutely certain!" replied Sheila with conviction. "I went in two minutes before we went to the music-room. I went to fetch some aspirin tablets I'd left there. I'd a ghastly head on yesterday evening, and in the end I had to go off early to bed instead of sticking out the whole of the practice. And everything was in perfect order then."

"Then it must have been done between half-past eight last night and eight-thirty this morning," said Christabel.

"Probably last night then!" remarked Doris Fielding, one of the prefects. "From my experience of them, I shouldn't say there were many kids here who'd get out of bed in the morning a minute before they were obliged to, even to rag a study."

It was the eleven o'clock break that same morning, and the prefects and some other of the older girls whom Sheila had called in to look at the wreck of her room were standing in the open doorway of Study Number Seven, gazing at the mess within, and discussing ways and means of discovering who was the author of the outrage.

"Yes, I expect it was done last night," agreed Meg Harrow. "Whoever it was would know that they had a fine opportunity while Sheila was in at orchestra practice."

"I wonder we didn't hear them, though," objected Brenda Norton. "I was in my study all the evening, and so were you, Chris. If it was done last night, it was funny that neither of us should have heard a sound, when you were one side of the room and I was the other."

"I was working. I don't think I should have taken any notice even if I had heard a noise," Christabel said. "Besides, whoever it was would have been pretty quiet. They would not have been likely to have made noise enough to have attracted any attention."

"Rather not!" commented Meg. "I bet they took jolly good care not to make a sound. My hat, though, Christabel, if we can find out who's done it, you won't half have to drop down on them for this. Fancy daring to rag a prefect's study! The cheek of them!"

"And such a rag, too!" said Doris. "I never saw such a mess in all my life! Some of your things are absolutely ruined, Sheila. That cushion—you'll never be able to get the feathers back into that cushion again."

"Yes, I'm afraid your cushion is done for," Christabel said. "We shall certainly have to rack our brains to find a punish

ment drastic enough to fit the crime when we've discovered the culprits. But we've got to find them first. Have you any idea yourself, Sheila, as to whom they might be?"

"What about that kid you stood out for supper, last night—Pip Martin?" asked Meg.

Sheila shook her head.

"No, it couldn't have been Pip, as it happens," she replied. "She's quite capable of doing it—and if it had been any other night, I should question her first of all. But she was in bed last night. Don't you remember matron coming and dragging her off after supper? I know for a fact that she was actually locked up in her cubicle until the time when I went up to bed. So I really don't see how it could have been Pip this time."

"Well, but was she locked up all night? If she wasn't, she might quite easily have slipped downstairs and done it when everybody else was asleep. If she wanted to pay you out for having given her a punishment, there was nothing to prevent her from going down and doing it in the night, unless she was under lock and key," Meg said.

"No, she wasn't locked up all night," Sheila answered. "When I went up to bed, I got the key from matron and unlocked the door. But all the same, I'm sure it wasn't Pip, for when I unlocked her, I made her give me her word of honour that she wouldn't leave her cubicle till the breakfast bell rang."

"Kids don't always keep their word of honour," said Doris drily.

"Oh, I don't know! I don't think you ought to say that. I think they do, most of them, at St. Cecilia's," remonstrated the head girl.

"Pip does, anyway," Sheila said with confidence. "Being her dormitory monitress, I've reason to know! She's the naughtiest, tiresomest imp of a child I've ever struck, and she gives me more trouble and worry than all the rest of the dormitory put together. But all the same, there are two things I'm sure she'd never do. She'd never tell a fib, and she'd never break her word of honour once she'd given it."

"Well, but what about her friends?" asked Meg with a laugh. "The young monkey's got no end of bosom pals. I'm not sure she isn't the most popular kid in the whole of the Junior School. How do you know she didn't put some of her chums on to ragging your study by way of getting her revenge upon you?"

"There's something in that," said Christabel reflectively. "I think it would be a good plan to question all the members of Form Four B and find out what they were all doing last night."

"Bit invidious though, wouldn't it be, to pick upon one form like that?" said Doris. "If by any chance none of them did it, Four B would shriek the place down with indignation at being singled out from the rest of the school."

"I suppose they would," laughed Christabel. "Well, then, there's nothing for it but to question the whole school. I'll call an assembly after dinner, and we'll make every single girl in the school say whether or not she's the guilty one."

"No, no! Don't do that! I don't want that done," Sheila said hastily. "That would be making too big a thing of it altogether. I'd rather the offender, whoever she is, went unpunished, than have it made the subject of a school row. Don't go having an assembly about it, Christabel, please!"

"Oh, well, of course, if you'd rather not——" Christabel said reluctantly. Christabel, as Pip had shrewdly surmised, rather liked calling assemblies. It made her feel the importance and prestige of her position as head girl—a position new to her this term.

"I won't make it a public affair if you'd rather I didn't," she said. "But I shall make some inquiries on my own account, and if we do find out who the culprit is, Sheila, you'll have to let justice be done. Meanwhile, what are you going to do about your study? You can't possibly use it while it's in that mess, and it will take more than an hour or two to put things right again. Would you like to share my room for a day or two while you get yours straight?"

"Thanks very much, I should," Sheila said gratefully. "It will be very decent of you if you'll let me share with you for to-day. Then I can get my fag along when she's got any free time, and we'll get the mess cleared up by degrees."

"I suppose it wasn't your fag that did it, by any chance?" Doris suggested.

"Who—Moira Hill? Rather not! She's a little shy mouse of a thing who wouldn't dare to say 'Bo' to a goose, let alone rag a study! She nearly wept over the mess in here this morning. Don't go asking her

questions, anyone, will you? I wouldn't have the child think I suspected her for worlds."

"I shall have to question her a little," said Christabel. "But you needn't be alarmed—I'll be very gentle with her! I agree with you, from what I've seen of her, I should say she'd be about the last person in the world who'd even dream of doing such a thing. Let me see, what form is she in? Upper Third is it, or Third Remove?"

"Neither. She's Lower Fourth this term," Sheila replied. "Though how she manages to survive there, I can't imagine!"

"Not exactly a congenial environment for a little mouse like Moira, certainly," Doris laughed. "Taking them all round, I should say Four B's about the rowdiest form in the school. By the way, how did you manage to get a fag from there? I thought the Lower Fourth didn't fag?"

"They don't as a rule. Don't think anybody wants them to, much!" said Sheila. "But Moira's been my fag ever since I've had my study, and when she was moved up this term she begged me to keep her on. And as she was a good little thing, and there was no rule to say a Lower Fourther mustn't fag—merely a tradition that they needn't—I did."

"Well, I shall be obliged to ask her a few questions," said Christabel. "And I shall have a query or two to put to those two children who are always about with Pip Martin—Susie and Aileen somebody—I can't remember what their surnames are. You won't have any objection to my doing that, Sheila, I suppose?"

"Oh, no! I only don't want it made a public matter. If you can find out who it was by making private inquiries, I shall be very glad. I'm as anxious as you are to see the culprit or culprits brought to book."

"Well, if you really are, you take my advice and make quite certain that that child Pip really did keep her parole," Doris Fielding remarked as she and the rest of the prefects departed.

Sheila did take her advice, and seized the first opportunity that occurred to question Pip upon the subject. But Pip raised such a reproachful face to hers that the elder girl felt quite guilty at having asked the question.

"Break my word of honour! Sheila! Of course I wouldn't do such a thing!" the injured innocent protested.

"Perhaps you wouldn't actually break your word," said Meg, who happened to be with Sheila at the time. "But we know what you kids are. You're quite capable of arguing to your own satisfaction that you never really promised. What we're trying to get at is, did you or did you not rag Sheila's study?"

This was a nasty one! But Sheila, unwittingly, helped Pip out of the dilemma.

"Did you get out of bed after we were all asleep and go down and make all that mess in my study, Pip?" asked the prefect.

Pip gave her another look of hurt reproach.

"From the time I gave you my word of honour last night until the bell rang for breakfast this morning, I stayed in my cubicle," she said with dignity. And the expression on her face deceived even the astute Meg.

"All right, kid, don't get huffy. We didn't mean to hurt your feelings," the Upper Fifth girl apologized. "It's only that we're anxious to find out who is at the bottom of this study-ragging affair, and we know you felt a bit of a grievance against Sheila."

"It's a lucky thing for you you were locked up in your cubicle last night, Pip, otherwise you might have been suspected," said Sheila with a conciliatory laugh. But Pip thought it wise not to be too easily conciliated.

"That's right! Give a dog a bad name and hang him at once!" she commented. And she marched away in a well-pretended dudgeon, which she kept up until she was out of sight of the two seniors, but which changed very rapidly to a fit of giggles when she had found and was relating the conversation to her two friends.

"Christabel has been at us about it, too," said Aileen. "But we got out of it ever so easily."

"Yes," supplemented Susie. "The silly ass asked us outright if it was either of us who had ragged Sheila's study. So of course we could say it wasn't with quite clear consciences. She said, 'Can you swear, on your honour, that it wasn't you?' And we could swear that quite truthfully. Wasn't it lucky she didn't ask if we *knew* anything about it? That really might have been a bit of a poser!"

"Well, we seem to have wangled out of it all right now," said Pip cheerfully. "I

hope we have, anyway. I don't want to get into any more rows now that I'm in the running for the Second Eleven. Once I've got through detention this afternoon, I mean to steer clear of all busts-up for a bit. I say, did you two think out any ideas for me for the essay, as you said you would?"

"Rather, I should think we did! We spent nearly the whole of last evening over it after we'd said good-bye to you," Susie said. "We've practically written the essay for you. All you'll have to do is to copy it out and add little bits here and there. Aileen's going to bring the rough copy in to dinner. Then you can put it into your pocket under cover of the tablecloth, and will not forget to take it into detention with you."

This plan of action was duly carried out. Pip got safely through her detention. The essay passed muster; and the new member of the Second Eleven was free to devote all her spare time to hockey practice for the next few days.

Her letter home asking for money to buy a new stick met with immediate response. A postal order arrived by return of post, and the three juniors hurried to put their names down for the next shopping expedition into the town. Much to their disappointment, however, they found that they were too late. An unusually large number of girls wanted to go shopping that week, and Miss Parr, who generally conducted the expedition, which only took place once a week, had closed the lists.

"I'm very sorry, children. I'm afraid you'll have to wait until next time," the mistress said. "What was it you wanted to buy?"

"A new hockey-stick for me," said Pip, looking so mournful that the games mistress's heart was moved with compassion. Hockey-sticks were subjects upon which she was naturally sympathetic, and she cast about in her mind for some way of easing the disappointment.

"Of course, I *could* choose one for you; but I suppose that wouldn't be quite the same thing. Oh, I know! Sheila! Sheila Morris, come here a minute, dear, will you? I want to ask you a favour."

Sheila, who had just come into sight on her way across the hall, came across to the glass window of the office in which Miss Parr was interviewing the applicants, with an inquiring expression on her face.

"Yes, Miss Parr? Is there something I can do for you?" she asked.

"Yes, there is! You and Meg Harrow are going into town this afternoon, are you not? I see you have your names down on the list. Will you be very kind and take these children with you? Philippa Martin wants to buy a new hockey-stick, and the junior walk is full up. I've refused a couple of dozen girls at least, so I can't let these three in now. But if you two seniors will take them with you, as members of your party, it will solve the difficulty nicely. Will you take them?"

"Of course we will," said Sheila pleasantly. It was only juniors who were obliged to go in charge of a mistress into town. Seniors were allowed to go alone in parties of twos or threes, while prefects, on the days set aside for shopping, were privileged to take three or four members of the junior school with them, should they so desire. It could hardly be said that Sheila did so desire upon this occasion, but since it was a mistress who had asked the favour, she could do nothing else than say "Yes." And though Pip, all things considered, would rather not have been under obligations to her enemy, she, too, could do nothing else but accept the arrangement. So, directly dinner was over that day, the party of five set off.

CHAPTER VIII

Pip's Pluck

THE two seniors had a good deal of shopping to do for themselves and other people, and by the time the athletic outfitter's was reached it was already growing late.

"Here, you three had better go along in and get what you want while Meg and I go across the road to the newsagent's," Sheila said to her charges. "We've only got to call for a magazine for Miss Lang, so we shan't be long. We'll wait outside Dolton's for you when we've finished; but for goodness' sake don't be long or we'll be late back at school."

But hockey-sticks are not things to be bought in a hurry. There are so many things to be considered, and Pip and her two friends took so long over their purchase, weighing and swinging every single stick in the shop to see which had the nicest "feel," that Meg and Sheila, who had soon finished their errand for the Sixth Form mistress, grew impatient at last. When a quarter of an hour had elapsed, and still the juniors had not emerged, Sheila felt

that it was about time she routed them out, and she dived into the shop after them.

"Look here, you kids! You really must come along," she said crossly. "It's getting ever so late and Miss Parr said particularly that we must get back before dark. Choose one of those sticks and then come away—or else come away without it."

"It's all right, Sheila, we've just chosen one," said Susie. And after a few minutes more of grumbling and fuming, Sheila got them out of the shop—Pip with the precious new stick wrapped up neatly in brown paper under her arm.

"Here you are at last!" said Meg, as the quartet joined her on the pavement. "I was just thinking of coming in to see what had happened to you. I say, Sheila, it's awfully late. I don't believe we shall get back before dark after all."

Sheila glanced down at her wrist watch.

"Twenty past five! Yes, it is late, much later than I meant to be starting back. Well, we've got to get in by six o'clock somehow. There's going to be a late tea for the shopping party at six."

"Pip clung to the boot with both hands and gnawed away grimly"

Drawn by Elizabeth Earnshaw

"We shan't get back to St. Cecilia's by six," said Meg. "It takes three-quarters of an hour from the town, at the very least."

"It won't take us as long as that if we go by the short cut—over the railway line," Sheila said.

"Oh, yes, we might do it that way," agreed Meg. "We shall have to walk up, though. Now then, you kids, you step out! It's your fault we're late, so mind you walk quickly and don't dawdle."

The party set off walking at top speed, the three smaller girls in front, the two seniors behind. The short cut took them across meadows and ploughed fields, and it was none too easy negotiating it at this time of the year. The track was rough and rather muddy, and the daylight was failing rapidly, so that it became a little difficult at last for the walkers to pick their way. As so often happens, the short cut, in the end, proved the longest way round, and it soon became obvious that whatever else they might do, the girls would not be home in time for six o'clock tea. However, they came to the railway crossing at last, and Sheila gave a sigh of relief.

The three juniors hurried through the small swing gate and ran across the line, and Sheila and Meg hurried after them. Perhaps it was because of the hurry, or perhaps it would have happened any way, but suddenly there came an exclamation from Sheila.

"Bother! I'm stuck. The heel of my boot has slipped between the rails, and I can't get out," the prefect cried in annoyed tones.

"Let me see if I can get it out," said

Meg, stooping down and grasping Sheila's ankle.

But all her efforts could not free the heel, which was firmly wedged between the rail and a sleeper. Sheila gave an exasperated laugh.

"I suppose I must unlace my boot, then, and see if I can get it out when my foot isn't inside," she said. "This will make us later than ever. Isn't it just the sort of thing that had to go and happen when we were late?"

"Just the sort of thing!" said Meg. "Oh, well, never mind. It won't make a bad excuse. After all, Miss Parr can't say very much. It's an accident that might happen to anybody."

"Not if we'd kept to the high road, as I don't mind betting Miss Parr will say that we ought to have done," said Sheila grimly as she stooped down and began to fumble with the knot of her bootlace. "Of course, the short cut isn't exactly out of bounds. But we never are supposed to go across the fields in the winter, and though October isn't winter, yet I guess it's near enough to give Miss Parr an excuse for a jaw."

"Oh, well, it can't be helped. We'll just have to grin and bear it," laughed Meg. Then all at once her laugh changed to an alarmed exclamation as a sharp click sounded close to them, and an overhead signal, which had been glowing red, suddenly turned to green.

"Goodness! There's a train coming! A down one. And—oh, Sheila! You're on the down line!" she cried in shrill alarm. As she spoke, the rumble of an oncoming train was distinctly audible, and she gave a frightened gasp.

"Be quick and undo your bootlace," she urged her friend anxiously. "That train's some way off yet. But it sounds like an express, and expresses do travel so awfully quickly. I daresay we'll have time to get that heel unfixed before it comes, but anyway, get your foot out of your boot first of all. What's the matter? Can't you untie it? Let me have a shot."

"I—don't think you'll be able to. I—I've got it in a knot," Sheila said.

"Sheila! You haven't! Well, we must cut it, then. Good heavens! I've left my knife at home. Give me yours. Quick!"

"I've not got mine, either," said Sheila, trying to keep a frightened little shake out of her voice. "And—and the lace is a new one. I can't break it. I've been trying."

Meg drew a quick breath of dismay.

"You kids, where are you? Haven't one of you got a knife?" she cried agitatedly to the three juniors, who had retraced their steps across the line and were now standing beside their elders in scared concern.

"I've not got mine," said Susie.

"Nor have I," said Aileen.

"I lost my knife last term," said Pip.

Meg literally wrung her hands.

"What shall we do, Sheila? You must pull your foot out somehow! Here! Hang on to me and pull as hard as you can. And you kids, Pip and Susie, catch hold of her ankle and tug for all you're worth. The heel went in—it *must* come out if we pull hard enough."

But the heel would not come out in spite of all the tugging and pulling. Sheila's ankle was nearly dragged out of joint by Pip's and Susie's united efforts, but still the heel stuck fast. Nor would it part company from the sole. Sheila's boots were of the very best hand-sewn variety, and to wrench the heel from one of them needed a force that the distracted girls could not apply in the little time at their disposal. Perhaps if they had had longer, or if they had not been working in semi-darkness, they might have been able to apply their strength more scientifically and have forced the heel out. But as things were they could do nothing—and the rumble grew to a roar, and all of a sudden two gleaming eyes appeared far down the line, as the train turned a distant corner and came tearing on through the dusk towards the little group of girls.

Then Meg lost her head. She gave a dreadful scream and began to run along the track towards the oncoming train, waving her arms about and shouting wildly, regardless that in half light she was not likely to be seen and that her voice could not possibly be heard above the roar of the engine.

Aileen began to sob, and Sheila, after one more frantic effort to free her foot from the rails that held it as in a vice, spoke to the juniors in a queer, hoarse voice.

"Get out of the way, you kids," she said. "Get off the line, quick! Right out of the way."

Susie obeyed her so far as to move back on to the other line where Aileen was standing. But Pip, who had been kneeling, tugging with all her might at Sheila's ankle, suddenly dropped down flat on the ground at Sheila's feet. A sudden memory

of another time when she had been hard up for a knife and the way in which she had solved the difficulty on that occasion had come to her. And seizing the knotted bootlace between her teeth, she began to bite into it viciously.

"Pip, what are you doing? Get up! Get up and clear out of the way at once!" cried Sheila, forgetting for the moment, in her anxiety about the junior, some of her own terror and dread. She grasped Pip by the shoulders and tried to lift her up from the ground. But Pip clung to the boot with both hands and gnawed away grimly in desperate haste—haste too desperate to allow her to stop even for a moment, to tell the senior what it was that she was trying to do. The roar of the train was growing so horribly near, and that new bootlace was so terribly strong and tough!

"Pip!" shrieked Sheila, losing her self-control. But even as her shriek rang out, she was conscious of a sudden looseness at her ankle. Pip raised her head and gave a triumphant shout. "Done it! Bitten it right through! Now pull your foot out, Sheila," she cried, her nimble fingers finishing the work her little strong teeth had begun.

Sheila's self-control came back as she felt the laces giving way. She dragged her foot free from the still imprisoned boot, grabbed Pip by the shoulders, and flung herself and her junior clear of the line hardly a moment before the express thundered by.

Meg returning, white with horror, from her fruitless effort to stop the train was greeted by Pip's reassuring shout.

"It's all right, Meg! Sheila's all right! I got her free just in time," the scapegrace of the Fourth announced as Meg came stumbling and sobbing towards them through the darkness, and Meg's sobs changed to a cry of joy as she clutched Sheila by the arm.

"Sheila! You're safe! Oh, I thought you would be killed! How did you do it?"

"I *didn't* do it. It was Pip," Sheila said in a shaky voice. "Don't ask me how she did it, though, for I haven't the faintest idea! She just flung herself down on the ground and grabbed my foot—and I found myself free. But what she did to the lace, I can't imagine."

"I gnawed it," said Pip.

"You did *what?*" asked Meg, staring down at Pip, at as much of her, at least, as she could see in the darkness.

"Gnawed it with my teeth."

"Bit through the lace!" exclaimed Sheila. "But it was such a strong one. How ever did you manage to bite right through!"

"My teeth are very sharp. I often use them to cut things with when I haven't got a knife," Pip said cheerfully.

"Wasn't it brainy of her to think of it!" said Susie admiringly.

"It was—more than brainy!" replied Sheila with an uncertain little laugh. "I'll tell you what I think of you, Pip, presently. But just at present I want to find a place where I can sit down for a few minutes. Somewhere not on the line!"

'We'd all better get somewhere not on the line," said Meg, suddenly recovering her wits. "There may be another train along directly. Hullo, Sheila! What's wrong? Do you feel queer? Here, hang on to me and let's get across to the other side. Steady on, old girl, try and not faint till we're through the gate. I guess we'll all feel safer when we're on the other side of it."

"I'm—not going to faint," said Sheila, stumbling across the line with the help of her friend. "It's only that I feel sort of limp and shaky. Reaction, I suppose, now that all the excitement is over! Whew! My ankle hurts a bit. I say, do be careful, everybody. Don't anybody else go and get stuck between the rails!"

"Your heel's still here, Sheila," Pip, who was lingering on the scene of the occurrence, remarked at this moment. "It's stuck down between the rail and one of the planks of the crossing, ever so tightly wedged. I can't find the teeniest bit of the rest of your boot, though."

"Pip, come away! Never mind my boot. Come away at once. Do come off the line, all of you. I simply can't bear it if you don't all come away at once," cried Sheila, whose nerves, pardonably perhaps, were in rather an agitated condition. Meg adding the weight of her authority, Pip reluctantly abandoned her explorations in search of the fragments of Sheila's boot, and followed the rest of the party through the gate and out on to the road on the other side of the line.

As the gate swung to behind them, Sheila sank down on the ground by the roadside with a gasp of relief.

"Thank goodness! Now I begin to feel a little safer. I don't think I shall ever

dare to cross a railway line again, though! I can't tell you what it felt like, standing there helpless with that awful train rushing down upon me. Pip, you're—you're—oh, I just don't know what to say to you!"

"Pip's a little brick," said Meg warmly. "And we'll tell her so presently. But don't let's think about the train now. How are we going to get you home, that's what we've got to think of! Does your ankle hurt very much, old thing? Do you think you'll be able to walk home? Or will you wait here with one of the kids while the rest of us hurry back to school for help?"

"Oh, I don't want to stay here by this horrible railway," Sheila said with a little shudder. "Don't let's separate. My ankle isn't really hurt, I think—only sore and strained from all the tugging. It's not having a boot to walk in that will be the principal bother. It's such a rough road to have to walk along without a boot!"

But here Pip, always fertile of ingenious ideas, came to the rescue. She pulled off her hat, a pliable black velour, and folded it into a hard pad.

"Tie this on to your foot with handkerchiefs," she suggested. "Then, at any rate, you won't cut your foot."

"What is it? Your hat! My dear kid, I can't use that! It would ruin it," said Sheila, peering down to see what the object was which Pip was trying to attach to the sole of her bootless foot.

"It's ruined already," Pip replied cheerfully. "I dropped it out of the lobby window the other day and forgot about it, and it was out all night in the rain. Matron's got me a new one, only I've not had time to put a hat-band on it yet. It won't matter a bit what you do to this. Give me your hankie, Aileen; I know you've got a nice big one. And if you give me yours, too, Susie, I can join it with mine to make another tie."

Pip's forceful determination carried the day. Under her directions the folded-up hat was strapped securely to the prefect's foot. And then the party, with Sheila clinging to Meg's arm limping along in its midst, wended its belated way back to school.

CHAPTER IX

A New Moon Wish

"AND Pip saved her? Bit right through her bootlace and dragged her out of the way just in time? Oh, well played, Pip!"

"Yes. Just as the express came *thundering* past!" The story was losing nothing in the telling. "It was almost dark, and the engine-driver couldn't possibly have seen her. It's not a proper crossing, you know, and there's no signal-box anywhere near, and there was absolutely nothing we could do to stop it. Meg ran up the line, shouting and waving, but of course they couldn't possibly hear her. Oh, it was awful! Aileen was blubbing like anything, and so was Meg. I couldn't make out what Pip was doing, and there was Sheila screaming at her to get out of the way, and the roar of the train was coming nearer and nearer. It was just like one of those awful dreams when something horrible is rushing down upon you and you are absolutely paralysed and can't move an inch. Only it was worse, because we knew it was real!" And Susie gave a little shudder of horror at the recollection.

"It must have been awful!" The members of Form Four B, the lessons which they should have been preparing quite forgotten, listened breathlessly as Susie and Aileen, perched up on their desks in the Lower Fourth classroom, recounted to a thrilled form the details of the adventure. "But how perfectly splendid of Pip! Why, she's a sort of heroine! It's just as brave as the things you read about girls doing in books."

"It's braver!" said Susie enthusiastically. "I shouldn't think it was so very difficult to plunge into a flooded river and save a person from drowning, or to fight your way through smoke and flame into a burning house. I shouldn't mind doing those sorts of things myself. But to kneel down in front of an express train, rushing along at sixty miles an hour, and calmly gnaw through somebody's bootlace when you *knew* the engine-driver couldn't possibly see you and couldn't have stopped the train in time even if he had—well, I simply couldn't have done it! Even if I'd thought about it, which I certainly did *not!*"

"Where is Pip now?" asked Rita.

"With Miss Druce. Meg and Sheila took her off to the Head soon's we got in. Aileen and I tried to sneak off with them, too. But Miss Parr collared us and sent us in to tea, and told us to buck up and get finished so's not to lose the whole of prep. We have bucked up, too, haven't we, Aileen? We wanted to be the first to tell you about Pip."

"The applause was so hearty that the heroine herself grew quite embarrassed" (p. 186)

"I wonder what Miss Druce will say to her? Wouldn't I just like to be in Pip's shoes now!" exclaimed Phyllis enviously.

"I bet you wouldn't have cared to have been in them much when she was on the line," said Susie.

"No, indeed! I'm sure none of us would," said Rita. "Not that I should have had any chance of being in them, though, even if I'd been near. I should never have dreamt of doing such a brainy thing."

"What will they do to Pip? Will they give her a medal, do you think?" inquired Moira Hill.

"They ought to! If justice were done, they'd give her the V.C.," said Susie.

"Silly! They only give V.C.'s in war-time. And then they don't give them to women," said Lucy Wetherall scornfully.

"I know they don't. I never said they did. I said that if *justice* were done they'd give it to her. So you needn't go putting your spoke in, Miss Loosey-poosey!"

"It was *brave* enough for a V.C.—that's what Susie means—though you did make it sound as though you meant what Lucy thought, Susie," said Aileen, interposing quickly to keep the peace. Aileen was often having to interpose quickly to keep the peace on behalf of her more easily excited friends. "I don't know whether they'll give her a medal or not. But anyway, whatever they do, we can give her a splendid reception when she comes back into school again."

"Rather! We'll give her a tophole one!" said Rita. "When shall we do it? I wonder when she's likely to be coming back into school."

"I don't expect she'll be back till supper-time," said Susie. "Miss Druce is sure to keep her a good while, and then she's got to have tea, and by that time I should think it would be time to go up to change. Look here—don't let anyone say anything to her till supper. We'll all buck up and get changed and go into the dining-hall early. And then, as soon as Pip appears, we'll cheer and cheer and cheer."

"Righto!" agreed the members of Form Four B, and there was not much more preparation done in Lower Fourth that night. Nor, indeed, in many of the other classrooms either! The news of Pip's exploit spread through the school with surprising rapidity, and Pip's reception when she appeared in the dining-hall at supper-time that night did not come from the ranks of the Lower Fourth only. The whole school joined in the cheer Pip's form-mates raised, and the applause was so hearty and so prolonged that the heroine herself grew quite red and embarrassed, while Miss Parr, whose duty night it was, had to ring her bell no fewer than five times before she could obtain silence to enable her to say grace.

Pip enjoyed the ovation, however, in spite of her embarrassment. It was nice to have everyone calling her a heroine and commending her for her pluck and presence of mind. It was pleasant to receive kind words and looks from the mistresses instead of the order-marks and impositions which were all that the staff of St. Cecilia's generally bestowed upon Pip. It was flattering to have the older girls patting her upon the back and inviting her to take tea with them in their private studies, as many of them did. It was even rather a jolly change to have matron smiling upon her and calling her "dear," apparently forgetting the number of times she had told her that she was "the naughtiest girl in the school—anyway, quite the worst in Dormitory Nine."

Pip enjoyed it all—except one thing. And that was Sheila's intense gratitude. Pip was not as a rule much troubled by her conscience, but, in this case, it was pricking her most uncomfortably. It is not pleasant to have your enemy—an enemy, moreover, to whom you have done a serious mischief—showering kindnesses upon you in every possible way. Every time Sheila spoke to her or smiled at her a vision of that feather-strewn study floated before Pip's eye. And Pip wished fervently that it had been somebody else's heel that had stuck in the railway line, so that she might have enjoyed her position as the heroine of St. Cecilia's without having to endure those uneasy twinges of remorse.

Even the fact that she had undoubtedly saved Sheila from death or, at the very least, terrible injury, did not bring Pip very much consolation. She was uneasily conscious that her brave deed had been just an impulse of the moment. She had not done it with any thought of making up to the prefect for all the mischief she had caused.

"It wasn't an *atonement*, you see," she confided to her two chief friends. Susie and Aileen still occupied that position, although Pip could have owned half the school as "special friends" at that moment if she had liked. "If I'd done it with any thought of making up to her for spoiling her things it would be different. But I didn't—and I do feel so mean when she goes about being so nice to me now."

"Why don't you tell her?" suggested Susie practically. "This would be rather a good time to confess, I should think. She's sure to let you off lightly just now, for she simply couldn't go dropping on you very badly just after you'd saved her life, and then you'd have eased your conscience."

But Pip hadn't quite brought herself to the point of making confession. The remembrance of the way Sheila had questioned her upon the subject and the manner in which she had evaded giving a straight answer was hurting her conscience quite as badly as—if not worse than—the ragging of the study itself. Of course she *hadn't* told a fib—Pip kept assuring herself of that. She had answered Sheila's questions quite truthfully. But—well, Pip couldn't bring herself to confess with that evasive answer in her memory. However little inclined Sheila might feel just now to drop down upon her for the study ragging, Pip was uncomfortably conscious that the prefect's opinion of her honour would sink considerably if Sheila ever came to know of the astute manner in which Pip had "wangled out" of the mess.

She tried to express something of this to Aileen and Susie, but she did not meet with very great understanding from either of them.

"After the way you behaved on the railway that night she couldn't think badly of you," Aileen said with unflinching loyalty, and Susie was of the same opinion, too.

"Besides, since you hate Sheila so much, I shouldn't have thought you'd have minded what she thought of you," Susie added.

"I do, though," said Pip. "I think I mind more what Sheila thinks of me than of anyone else in the school. It's queer—but I really believe I do!"

Then she went on reflectively:

"I'm not so sure that I do hate her so now. She's been awfully decent to me lately. I suppose you can't really hate a person whose life you've saved—it gives you a sort of interest in them, somehow. Anyway, I'm awfully sorry I ever ragged that beastly study now, and I do wish I could think of some way of making up to Sheila for having spoilt her cushions and things."

The three were walking down from the playing-field—not arm-in-arm this time! Pip had been practising with the Second Eleven, and Susie and Aileen with members of their own form. As she spoke the last words, Pip dropped her hockey-stick, which she had been balancing on her shoulder, and she stopped for a moment to pick it up. Just as she did so she caught sight of a new moon shining in the sky behind her.

"Hullo, there's the new moon," she remarked.

"And you're looking at it over your right shoulder! Oh, Pip, then your wish will come true!" cried Aileen.

"What did she wish? Oh, of course, I remember—that she could think of some way of making up to Sheila for that study affair. Well, it was a rotten wish, anyway, so you won't be disappointed, Pip, when it doesn't come true. New moon wishes never do!"

But it seemed as though this one was going to. As the three juniors were washing their hands in the downstairs cloakroom before proceeding to their dormitory to make themselves tidy for tea, Lucy Wetherall, who had not been playing hockey that afternoon, came hurrying in with a kettle in her hand, which she proceeded to fill at one of the taps.

"Hullo, who's that for?" Susie asked inquisitively.

"For Sheila Morris. She's going to have tea in her study to-day," Lucy announced in an important manner.

"What are you filling her kettle for?" inquired Pip. "You're not her fag."

"I know I'm not. But I'm going to be for a day or two. Moira's gone across to the San with flu, and I've promised her I'd see to Sheila while she was gone."

"Oh, has Moira got flu now? I'm not at all surprised to hear that. I thought she was looking awfully groggy at dinner to-day," Susie commented.

"She did look rotten, didn't she? I think she's pretty bad. I took her to matron, and when matron had taken her temperature she got fearfully excited and 'phoned over to the San, and I heard her telling sister that Moira's temperature was a hundred and three."

"I say! That's pretty bad, isn't it?" said Aileen.

"Yes, I think it is. The poor kid felt pretty bad, too. She was crying like anything, and she was awfully upset about Sheila. She made me promise to fag for her properly while she was away. Here! I say, look out, Pip! What on earth are you up to? You'll make me spill all the water if you don't take care."

For Pip, who had been lost in thought for a moment or two, had suddenly flung aside the towel she had been using and had grabbed hold of the handle of Lucy's kettle.

"Give the kettle to me. I'm going to fag for Sheila while Moira's away," Pip announced.

"You can't! I'm going to. I promised Moira I would!" Lucy expostulated indignantly.

"Moira won't mind if I do it instead of you. You don't really want to and I do. Give me the kettle, and I'll take it to Sheila and explain."

"Well, I do call that cool! You can't go fagging for Sheila now. I've said I would, and Sheila knows I'm going to. Besides, Moira's told me what I've got to do, and you wouldn't know anything."

"You can tell me. Or if you won't, I can find out some other way. I think I ought to be allowed to fag for Sheila if I want to. After all, I saved her life, you know," said the Fourth Form heroine.

"Yes, Lucy. Pip saved her life. If it hadn't been for Pip Sheila wouldn't be wanting *anyone* to fag for her at all," said Susie, taking her chum's side.

"I don't see that saving her life gives her the right to go fagging for her, all the same," objected Lucy. "It was me Moira asked. And anyway, Pip always used to say she hated Sheila. So why should she want to go and fag for her now?"

"Well, but I'm changing my mind about hating her," Pip explained. "She's been awfully decent to me lately. I'm not at all sure I shan't get to like her in a bit. Of course, I don't want to do you out of it, if you're really frightfully keen on taking it on. But unless you really are fearfully gone on it, I do wish you'd let me. I've got special reasons for asking it."

"Oh, well, if you want to do it as much as that, I don't know that I'm so frightfully keen," said Lucy reluctantly. Lucy knew very well that she would have all the members of the form against her if she tried to stick to her guns. The whole of the Lower Fourth would be certain to take Pip's side. If Pip was quite determined, it would be much wiser to give in gracefully at once, rather than attempt to fight the matter out. "I'm sure I should make a much *better* fag than you, though. You'll never dust her study properly, and you'll use blacking on her best patent leather shoes, and you'll never remember to make sure that the water's boiling when you're getting tea. Moira says Sheila is most awfully particular about the water being boiling when you're making her tea."

But Pip's friends did not seem to think that Lucy's superior capacities as a fag made the least difference to Pip's claim upon the post.

"Sheila wouldn't be likely to scold her, even if the water wasn't quite boiling, after Pip had saved her life," said Aileen, while Susie remarked with decision:

"If Pip's really keen on being Sheila's fag, I think you'll be a perfect pig if you don't let her be, Lucy."

"Oh, all right," said Lucy, yielding the point and the kettle at one and the same time. "You'll find the matches behind the photograph frame on the right-hand side of the mantelpiece, and the spirit stove and the bottle of 'meths' are in the cupboard. You can do it, if Sheila will let you. Though why on earth you're so desperately keen about it, when everybody in Four B except Moira has always said that they hate fagging—beats me!"

"Why *are* you so keen on it, Pip?" asked Susie, when Lucy had finally relinquished the kettle, and Pip, accompanied by her two friends, was carrying it in the direction of Study Number Seven.

"Because it's my wish, of course!" replied Pip. "Didn't I wish that I could think of some way of making up to Sheila for—you know what!—just before I saw the new moon over my right shoulder?"

"Do you think your fagging will really make up for it, then?" asked Susie doubtfully.

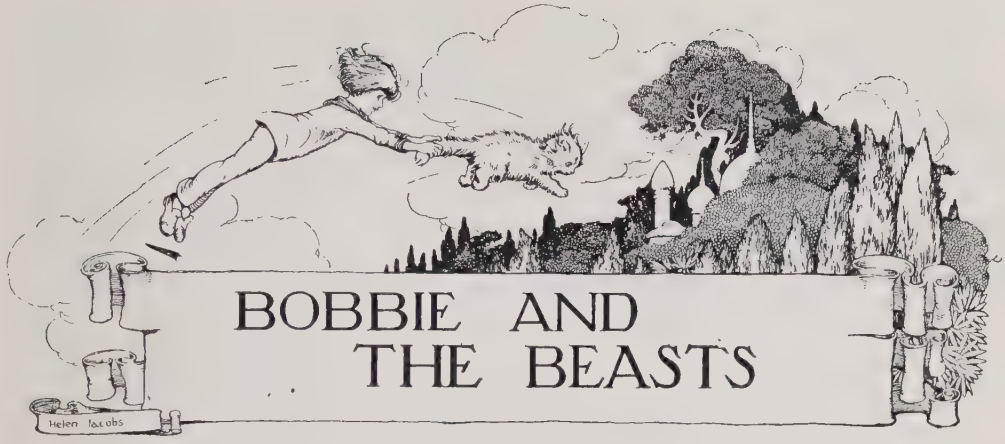
"Well, perhaps not my fagging exactly. But if I'm Sheila's fag, it ought to be possible to find out something that I could do to atone," Pip said.

"I shall always believe in new moon wishes now," said Aileen.

"Rot! There's nothing in it! It was just an accident," Susie scoffed. "Besides, Sheila hasn't agreed yet to take Pip on as her fag."

But Sheila had no objections to offer when Pip knocked at her door with the kettle and informed her that she had come to take the flu-stricken Moria's place. And before she went to bed that night Pip had embarked upon her duties and was firmly established in a position which a few weeks back she would never have dreamt of occupying—that of Sheila Morris's fag

(To be continued)



BOBBIE AND THE BEASTS

By Violet M. Methley

NO. 3.—BOBBIE AND THE RABBITS

NOW, all children who keep pets—and I suppose very few of you don't—will know how very important it is to feed them properly, and never, never to forget, even if you *have* been on the river all day.

But that was what Bobbie did—he forgot, I mean.

You see, they had started for Richmond very early in the morning, before Susan's breakfast-time. Susan was Bobbie's new lop-eared piebald rabbit, and she was very beautiful and very fat and very greedy.

When they came back from Richmond Bobbie was so hot and thirsty and sleepy that he couldn't think of anything but tea and bed.

It was only when he suddenly woke up, hours afterwards, and saw the moonlight shining into the room that he remembered poor Susan had had no breakfast, and no dinner, and no supper. It was an awful idea!

"Oh dear! Perhaps she's starved to death!" Bobbie thought. "What a cruel pig I am! I'll go and feed her at once, if she isn't dead."

So the little boy scrambled out of bed, and put on his blue dressing-gown and his red shoes, and crept downstairs very, very softly, and out into the back-yard, where Susan lived in her hutch.

It was all bright moonlight, but at first Bobbie hardly dared to look, he was so afraid of finding Susan dead and starved. Then he saw her soft nose poking between the wooden bars of the hutch, and it *was* a comfort.

"Oh, Susan, I am glad you're not dead!" he said. "Are you most frightfully hungry, you poor little darling thing? Look—I've brought you a whole lovely lettuce."

Bobbie held out a lettuce-leaf, and Susan pulled it in with her soft lips, as rabbits do, tugging quite hard.

"We'll have a tug-of-war," Bobbie said, and he took one end of a leaf in his own mouth, and nibbled, whilst Susan nibbled the other end, and they both pulled as hard as they could, until the leaf broke in half.

And then Susan said in a rather peevish voice:

"Weally, you're vewy silly!"

Bobbie was so surprised that he sat down hurriedly on the dustbin.

"Did you—did you talk?" he said. "I didn't know you could."

"We wabbits talk just as much as you do—only you can't understand!" Susan said crossly, and then Bobbie remembered Kate, the kitten

and the milk, and knew it was because of the lettuce-leaf.

"Oh, then, won't you take me to the Fairy Zoo again?" he asked in a great hurry. "And can you tell me how to get Elephant's Hairs?"

"I don't know anything about Elephants," Susan answered. "But I go to my little house in Fairy-Beast-Land every night, so you can come, too, if you like."

"Oh, thank you," Bobbie cried. "Shall we go through the picture in the nursery?"

"Dear me, no!" Susan said in a superior voice. "We Wabbits go thwough a Wabbit-hole to the Wawwen. My house is Number Thwee Wawwen Villas. Open the hutch door and come in. We're vewy late."

Bobbie opened the hutch door, but he didn't see how he could come in. Then Susan scratched away the hay in a corner, and he saw a hole, and before he could say anything more she was half-way inside it, and saying in a muffled voice:

"Come on!"

Suddenly Bobbie found that either he'd got smaller or the hole bigger—he couldn't say which—and he scrambled into the hutch and crept into the tunnel after Susan's fat back.

They went creeping on and on for a long, long way, until at last Bobbie saw a little speck of light in the distance, getting bigger and bigger, and he knew that it must be the other end of the long tunnel.

Then they crept out into bright moonlight again, into a place that was all grassy hillocks, and little front doors in the hillocks, with large numbers on them. As he crawled out Bobbie thought he caught just a glimpse of dozens and dozens of rabbits, or, at least, dozens and dozens of little white scuts. But before he could stand up, they had all disappeared.

"That is my house," Susan said, with a wave of her paw towards a front door with a large "3" on it. "It's vewy cosy inside. All the Wabbits in Faiwy-Beast-Land live here, and if you sit quiet they'll soon come out again. I must weally have a little gwass myself."

She began to nibble away, and Bobbie thought it rather greedy, considering what a lot of lettuce she had eaten only a little while before. But then he remembered that the poor thing had been starving all day.

So he sat quiet and waited, but not a single rabbit appeared.

"How long do you think they'll be?" he asked Susan.

"Oh, perhaps years and years," she answered. "Or perhaps days and days. Or perhaps minutes and minutes. Wabbits are *vewy* shy."

So Bobbie waited again. And presently a white rabbit popped out of a front-door close by and trotted quickly past, talking to himself

"Oh dear! oh dear!" he said. "I shall be late; I know I shall! Wherever *did* I put them?"

"I know where he's going—it's to the Duchess's tea-party!" Bobbie said out loud; and directly he said it, it seemed as though the rabbits weren't frightened any more. From all the front doors heads popped out, and a rabbit in a blue coat, with a big carrot sticking out of the pocket, came trotting up to him.

"I'm so glad that you're a fwiend," he said, and he talked in the same lisping rabbity way that Susan did. "I wonder if you know *me!*"

"Why, of course—you're Peter Rabbit," Bobbie said. "I'd know you anywhere. And there's Benjamin Bunny—oh yes, and all the Flopsy Bunnies! What fun!"

Peter Rabbit smiled in a pleasant sort of way.

"We're vewy glad to welcome you to the Wawwen," he said.

"Thank you, so much," Bobbie answered. "Oh—and *could* you tell me where to get some Elephant's

Hairs ? That is really what I've come for."

Peter Rabbit shook his head in the way poor Bobbie was getting used to by this time.

" I don't know any more about Elephants than you do about Esquimaux," he said. " I've never even seen one. There's only *one* Wabbit who might be able to help you, because he's vewy old and vewy wise."

" Will you take me to him ? " Bobbie asked eagerly.

" Later on," Peter Rabbit answered. " But he's so old that he never comes out till the moon has warmed things a bit. So let's have a game first. Come on ! "

So Bobbie came on. And Benjamin Bunny and all the Flopsy Bunnies came on, too, and raced round and round in circles with their ears back and their scuts stuck up. And Bobbie raced round and round with them, and enjoyed himself thoroughly.

Then suddenly an enormous rabbit rushed out of the front door marked " 13," and tore right through the middle of their ring, kicking over a very small rabbit, who began to cry.

" I wish you wouldn't come and spoil our game, March Hare," Peter Rabbit said crossly. " You're so big and rough."

The March Hare did not answer at first, only rolled his big eyes and stared at Bobbie. Then he spoke, in a deep, hoarse voice :

" Why is a caterpillar like a hot roll ? "

" Oh, I've often heard *that* riddle ! " Bobbie said. " It's something about making a butterfly."

" Making the *best* butter fly," the March Hare said, in his deep voice. " It must be the *best* butter."

And, without another word, he went tearing away, with his eyes starting out of his head, and the little rabbit sat and cried and cried.

" Ece ! " he sobbed. " E—eee-ee ! "

Then Bobbie saw that he was the tiniest rabbit, with the largest ears that he had ever seen, and he knew he was,—well, you know, too, I expect.

" Oh, poor little Wilfrid ! " he cried, but Peter Rabbit spoke rather crossly.

" Well, he's much too small to play with us," he said. " I've always told him that he ought to go with the Hare's young Child, the little Hare —they're *much* more the same size. Babies are always a nuisance. But let's have another game ! "

" Don't you think the wise old rabbit may be coming out soon ? " Bobbie asked. " Because I *do* so want to ask him about the Hair."

But Peter Rabbit had raced off again and didn't hear him. It was another voice which answered—quite a different voice and rather sing-songy.

" Oh, yess, yess ; but surely to goodness, I don't know at all, whateffer ! " it said.

Bobbie looked round, and saw a bright yellow, daffodil-coloured rabbit sitting at the door of a little house, and wearing a green coat and a very large top-hat.

" I'm afraid I don't know who you are," Bobbie said politely.

" Oh dear, dear ! Goot gracious ! Can't you tell by my leek ? " the yellow rabbit said, and Bobbie saw that it wore a leek stuck into the band of the top-hat.

" I think you must be——" he began, but the rabbit interrupted.

" Of course I am what I must be, if I must be what I am," he said. " Yess, yess ; I am the Welsh Rabbit. Efferybody likes me, and I am the only Rabbit in Society. You will meet me efferywhere, but I am not at all proud whateffer—no, no ! "

" Then perhaps if you go everywhere you can tell me how to find some Elephant's Hairs," Bobbie said hopefully, but the Welsh Rabbit only shook his head as usual.

" No, I have neffer met an Elephant," he

said. "But here is our old friend, whateffer."

Then Bobbie saw that a very old grey rabbit had crept out into the moonlight and was looking at him with wise, bright eyes. So he asked his usual question, which I need not repeat all over again.

But the old rabbit only shook his head in his wise way.

"No, dis chile doesn't know nuffin about it," he said. "I haven't seen no effelunts where I lib. I don't nebber know nuffin, chile; I jus' lie low and say nuffin."

"Oh, Brer Rabbit!" Bobbie cried. "I *am* glad really to see you. And won't you tell me what exactly happened to the Tar Baby after——"

But before Bobbie could get any further he felt Susan's soft nose nuzzling against his knee.

"We must go back," she lisped. "I'm vewy hungwy and I want some more lettuce leaves."

"Oh, do let me stay a little longer," Bobbie begged, but Susan only went on pulling at his dressing-gown with her soft lips, so the little boy was obliged to follow her, although he did want so particularly to stay and talk to Brer Rabbit.

They crawled back along the long tunnel, and at last they came out into the rabbit hutch again. Susan went straight to the lettuce-leaves and began simply to gobble them, and she wouldn't take any notice at all when Bobbie spoke to her.

So at last he crept up to bed again and went to sleep, and never woke up at all any more until Nurse came to call him in the morning.

And the first thing she saw was his red slippers.

"Goodness me, Master Bobbie, what *have* you been doing?" she cried. "Getting your shoes in all that mess with dust and water and mud!"

"I—I went down to the back-yard to feed Susan in the middle of the night," Bobbie said, rather sleepily; because it was no good to tell Nurse anything about Fairy-Beast-Land. "I'd forgotten her breakfast and her dinner and her supper, and I thought that she'd starve to death, poor darling. And she *was* most frightfully hungry!"

"Stuff and nonsense!" Nurse said crossly. "*I* didn't forget to feed the greedy beast; and she had a good breakfast and dinner and supper, just as usual. Other people remember, if you don't, Master Bobbie."

So Bobbie didn't say any more. But when he remembered how Susan had stuffed, he had to agree that she *was* greedy!

Next Month—"Bobbie and the Birds"

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The COUNTERFEIT STAMP

By Ethel Talbot

JEEVES'S shop certainly wasn't particularly big. But still, as we informed Brenda pretty scathingly, in a village of the size of Seascale it was proportionately as big as one of the Stores is to town. "Or *bigger!*" said we.

That shut her up *pro tem.* But, for a new girl, she certainly was not easy to sit upon and squash.

Not that you need think we wanted to squash her, when she first came. "The squashing of freshers is *not* an art which we cultivate here." I heard one of the prefects, once upon a time, utter those very words. No, freshers are treated almost like visitors for quite a week. But during that week, of course, we're taking notes all the while.

In Brenda's second week she certainly *did* have to be squashed.

She was so swanky, so very extra-ly so. Of course, we expected her to have opinions of her own; every one of us has them. But still, we didn't want, at every turn, to hear our school and its ways contrasted disfavourably with the school she'd come from.

She'd come from a day-school—a jolly good one, too—right in the City of London. We'd all heard of it; once we'd had a mistress who'd taught there; and we knew a bit about their ways from her. But we'd enjoyed listening to what Miss Wallis had told us; we did *not* enjoy Brenda's tales. Everything they'd had there was bigger and better and more beautiful, in her opinion. For the first week we stood it—for the sake of politeness; the next week we didn't.

"We suppose you're school-sick," said we to her in the dorm; "but we've given you a week to get used to our school—and, after all, it's yours, too, now, isn't it? If you could just *realize* that"

That was in the dorm. Peg, Gerry and I were undressing at the time.

"And, after all," said one of us—I forget which—"*we* have Clubs and Guides and things, too."

"Why, you haven't even got a Club-room here," said Brenda.

"No; but we use the Common Room, and ours is a much smaller school—there's oceans of room; you'll see to-morrow, for there's a philatelist meeting, and freshers are allowed in always, so that they can see whether they'll like to join."

Brenda sniffed a little, but we could see that she was rather impressed. "I didn't know you'd got a Philatelist Club here," said she. "I'm awfully keen. Do you have lecturers down? We always did at 'the City.'"

We didn't. And we told her so. "We're beginning," we said. "Last term was our first. Every girl belongs to it."

"Where d'you get your stamps?" inquired Brenda.

Well, "getting stamps," as Miss Terry, the History Mistress, who's president of the Club, had explained to us, wasn't the only aim of our Philatelist Club. It had made us most awfully interested in history and geog. classes, and even those of us who had very few were quite as keen as everyone else.

"As everybody knows," we told Brenda, "it rather depends on your home people how many stamps you've got. We're only at the beginning of our collections now; and it just *happens* that Louie, who's nearly at the bottom of the school, has almost the best collection because her father's the manager of a bank who gets all kinds of foreign letters. Well, that just shows——"

"But don't you buy *any?*" inquired Brenda rather scornfully. "I don't believe in a stamp club without stamps, I must say. *We*, at 'the City,' used to patronize the Stores mostly. Of course, they *knew* we couldn't be bamboozled. . . ."

"Bamboozled?" said we.

"Oh, some shops do it! Just sell a lot of fakes for stamps! The Stores wouldn't. That's why we went there. Where *do* you go?"

"Any we bought we bought from Jeeves," said we.

"*What?*" yelled Brenda, twisting round with a squeal.

"Well?" said we, brushing our hair.

But, of course, we knew absolutely well the meaning of her squeal; she was laughing at poor old Jeeves's shop. Now, she could laugh at *us* as much as she liked, for we knew perfectly well that there was nothing to laugh at. But, when it came to laughing at Jeeves——

I'd better explain, I think. Jeeves had the general shop in the village. There's a new store, and a few fairly decent shops cropping up there; but a whole colony of them could crop up if they liked. So long as Jeeves's shop was there, that was where all of us girls went.

Jeeves used to have two sons. One of them was the school gardener, and he was killed in the war. The other got a Government permit and a grant big enough, too, to go out to Australia. He's got a wife there, and the pair of them were saving up so that old Jeeves could go out, too.

Well, Jeeves, in spite of his tumble-down, shanty-looking shop—for I'm not pretending it wasn't that—was a sort of special person to us.

"You mean to say that you buy stamps at that little—hovel?" squeaked Brenda.

"And you'd be living in a hovel, we jolly well bet," said we, "if Jeeves wasn't. We mean that if his sons hadn't gone to the war—and other people's sons, too, of course—who knows what mightn't have happened? And if you dare to try and run down Jeeves——"

Brenda twisted her lip up in a most superior way—she could be seen doing it through the glass—but she said no more.

"As a matter of fact," said Meg, cooling down, "Jeeves has got some really jolly packets. He unearthed them from some long-forgotten drawer when we started the stamp craze; a shilling each, they are; and Miss Terry herself said that there wasn't any harm in buying a packet or two to start off with. . . ."

"H'm!" said Brenda.

But she really was keen on stamps. There was no doubt of that. At the philatelist meeting next night she brought down her book, and it was jolly interesting. She'd got the very latest thing in Lincolns, and Miss Terry and she were talking for quite a long time about water-marks and things. When we got up to the dorm that night, Brenda actually said a few words in praise of Miss Terry's philatelistic knowledge.

"Really, she seems to know almost as much as Miss Dean, of 'the City,'" said Brenda. "Quite interesting to talk to. . . ."

"How kind!" said we.

"And I've a good mind," continued Brenda, innocent of our satire, "to have a look at those packets of stamps. If Miss Terry thinks there's anything worth while in them—they'll some of them not be fakes, I dare say, though in my opinion it's a risk. . . ."

"Fakes! You'd not get Jeeves to *sell* a fake," said we.

"How could he help it? He wouldn't know, if Jeeves is that old toothless-looking man who served me with cotton," said Brenda, swooping round.

"No one need sell counterfeit things," said we, rather getting the worst of the argument; "and Jeeves wouldn't deal with any firm who'd sell him such things. So that's *that!*"

"Hum!" said Brenda again.

But next day when we went down to Jeeves's she certainly asked to see the packets. She was awfully impressed by the value of them, too, and stumped up instantly for one with a Chinese stamp on the cover.

"If that's not a fake," said she to Jeeves, staring hard at him, "it's worth almost the whole shilling in itself!"

Ha, ha!" thought we, in the background.

"Yes, missie," said dear old Jeeves, "but I've found out, missie, that when there's a good stamp, missie, on the outside, then there's precious little value inside, pretty often. And that I'd have you know. . ."

"I don't think anyone can teach *me* much about stamp-buying," remarked Brenda, paying down her shilling.

"No, missie," agreed dear old Jeeves. And home we went.

"*Well!*" said Brenda, to a string of us in the cloak-room as she took off her hat. "Honestly, that Chinese stamp is a scoop—in a shilling packet, I mean. As a matter of fact, I hadn't got that one, and I've been trying to swap for it for quite a while. That's, of course, if it isn't a counterfeit stamp."

"Jeeves doesn't sell 'em," said we, unlacing our shoes.

So many of us said the words, and we said it in such tones of wrath, that Brenda dried up, and only hummed for a while. "Seeing's believing, of course," said she. "Wait till I get upstairs and look at the water-mark. Then I shall know. . . ."

She was doing it when we came upstairs to the dorm. The shilling packet had been spread out on her bed, and she was gazing at each in turn. "The Chinese one's all right," said she, without looking up.

We didn't think it necessary to answer.

"But—the rest!" Brenda gave a hoot of scorn. "Not a farthing's worth between them! I'll pitch 'em out of the window, I rather think. These stupid shilling packets!"

"When you've finished," said we, "you'll perhaps allow us to remind you that Jeeves told you with his own lips that you'd get nothing inside that was worth much."

"He didn't tell me there was a fake inside, though!" said Brenda, with a sneer.

"There isn't," said we.

"Look here, then!" Brenda extracted a stamp and held it up. "If that isn't a

"'Look here, then!' Brenda extracted a stamp and held it up"

Drawn by I. M. Faulks

fake, I'll—eat my Lincoln! Why, I know, I literally *know* it's one. I can tell by the look of it. And, besides——"

"You *are* jolly brainy as regards stamps; we'll allow you that," said Meg. "But it's not likely that you can tell at a glance whether a stamp's faked or not. You'll probably find yourself fitting it into your album all right before you're half an hour older."

"I won't." Brenda stood up. "Because—well, you shall just see. I bet there's not a space for it. I bet there isn't. . . ."

"What do you bet?" said we. "*We'll* bet you that the stamp's all right, and Jeeves's reputation, too, which you're jolly well blackening with every word. And, if

you find there isn't a place for it—well, then, you shall choose any stamp you like out of any one of our albums, and we'll take that one in exchange, eh, Gerry?" Meg was speaking. Before we'd hardly nodded, Brenda was chortling with joy. "*Oh! Good!* Taken, oh, *rather!* I know which I'll have, too. I'll have Meg's Cape of Good Hope!"

"Don't you see yourself getting it!" grinned we.

But she did.

We simply gasped when, with everybody standing round, Brenda opened her album downstairs and stared through it. "It's a so-called British Guiana stamp," said she; "a one cent one. And there *is* no space for it. There's not such a thing. Well, and you can tell by the very look of it. . . ."

It was our turn to stand silent. Meg, without a word, went to her locker and got out her own book, and handed over the green Cape of Good Hope. "Much good may it do you," said she. "Pass me over Jeeves's stamp."

"Right you are," said Brenda, chortling, as she stuck the Cape stamp into the Cape page. But there was a strained sort of feeling in the room, somehow; and Miss Terry, coming in, noticed it.

"Anything wrong?" said she.

Brenda told her. She was rather keen on Miss Terry since the philatelist day; I mentioned, didn't I, that they'd talked stamps together? "It's simply *tosh*," said Brenda, "to stick up for an old man, and say that he doesn't sell fakes. They *all* do!"

"Well!" Miss Terry's as fond of Jeeves as we are, and she wasn't going to stand Brenda's head-in-airness any more than we did. "Show me the stamp," said Miss Terry. And Meg pulled it out. "It certainly *does* look like a fake, and I believe it is one," said Miss Terry. "And, Meg, with your permission, I'll show it to old Jeeves myself. It will be as well for him to know, if he's dealing with that firm again, for all of you girls seem to be inclined to buy these packets." She went off.

"Hum! Hum!" went Brenda. We could have scragged her.

Not because she'd won the bet; I hope and trust we'd not be so unsporting as that; but because, somehow or other, she seemed pleased that Jeeves had come off worst. "She couldn't have been expected to want to come off worst herself, naturally," as Meg said, "but still, there is a limit. . . ."

We agreed. Strange to say we rather left Brenda alone, too; we tried to forget, but we didn't. The gleam seemed gone, somehow, out of philately; and we didn't want the next Club meeting with the same zest. We didn't know what was going to happen, you see—then.

It happened all right, though; it happened on the very afternoon of the Philatelist Club meeting. Meg and Gerry and I got leave to go down to Jeeves's for something or other, and *it* happened then. *It*. Oh, it ought to be written in the hugest capitals there are.

Old Jeeves came to meet us, rubbing his hands. "Oh, missies—well, and if you isn't just the very ones as I was longing to see. You'll mind that Miss Terry brought me along a stamp?"

"Oh, yes, rather!" said we, trying not to show by our faces how much we *had* "minded."

"Well, missies, as I said to her then, I did: 'I am *that* sorry, and I'll give the young lady wot got it a whole new shilling packet free gratis and for nothing at all. Oh, yes, I will,' says I, and tried to make her take it. But 'No,' says your Miss Terry. 'You meant no harm, Jeeves, and no harm's thought. And all you've got to do is to be a bit careful to buy your packets from some fine high-class firm!' 'Miss, I will,' ses I. 'But what firm these was bought off passes me, seein' as they was all along of the goodwill of the shop come fifty years agone.'" Old Jeeves stopped for breath.

"It's all right," we told him. "Absolutely all right. And don't think about it any more."

"Eh——" But on he went. "It ain't often I's got a complaint from you high young ladies," said old Jeeves; "and it worrited me sore. I set that night and looked at that there fake stamp till you might say that I could have known it blinded. W'en my niece's husbing wot knows a bit about stamps comes in, I shows it to him, and tells him all what had taken place.

"'You give it here to me,' ses he; 'I'll soon tell you true whether it be faked or not. There's many a stamp,' said my niece's husbing, 'as ain't faked at all; and not meaning any disrespect to the young ladies at the school, there's many a mis-

take made, what ain't a mistake at all.' An' off he goes."

Old Jeeves stopped again.

"We've really come to buy some string," put in we, to stem his torrents.

"An' string I'll be glad to sell ye, missies, only——" On he went. "It's this way. My niece's husbing's jest been in, and he's brought news from a chum of his what works porter at the bank that his chum has showed it to one of them gentlemen clerks there what knows all there is to be known about stamps. Well, then——" Jeeves stopped.

"You mean it *is*n't a fake?" yelled we.

"Missies"—old Jeeves fairly sobbed—"I's not to say much at learning, but this is what it comes to. That there's a hold stamp, and rare—oh, very rare; 1856 it be made; and that being the year of my birth, missies, I shan't get it wrong. Well, then, and the clerk from the bank was took all of a shake when he saw it. The rarest stamp in the world, so he called it. There never were another like it. *Fake!*"

We were dumbfounded.

Truly, of course, we didn't believe it. We thought he'd got the tale wrong, or else that the niece's "husbing" had, or else the clerk at the bank. We certainly talked of what it all might have meant, as we scooted home; but we didn't intend to say much about it.

Say much about it! The school was in an uproar when we got there. The bank manager had been up himself to see Miss Grant, our Head. He had asked for permission to negotiate the sale. Things were beginning to hum.

Brenda had, however, stopped humming. *She* was feeling a bit down in the mouth. She knew a jolly lot about stamps, as I've said before; and it didn't take her long to twig that here was a matter of a round thousand pounds.

It was, too—one thousand five hundred pounds was the sum that it got—the little faked stamp out of the shilling packet. Even the green Cape of Good Hope must have tasted like dust and ashes in Brenda's lips now. "I suppose," said she, staring from it into the brilliant-cheeked face of Meg, "that—you'll do something *scrummy* with the cash."

"Something absolutely *it!*" said Meg.

For *she* knew; and *we* knew what she'd do; and all the school guessed. And Miss Grant had said that if Meg's parents agreed it would be an A1 thing to do. And Meg's pater said: "Rather!" And the only thing left to do was to go down to old Jeeves's shop all in a line, Meg and Gerry and me.

"Bravo!" shouted old Jeeves, at the sight of us, though of course he'd not got an inkling what was coming.

When Meg told him, he literally sobbed.

"*What!* But I couldn't," said he. "*No, no.* Even high young ladies, so I've heard, has a mort of wishes for gold and di'monds. No, no. It's enough and more for me, an old man what thort he'd offended the school, to know as the stamp weren't a fake after all. But—— Australy, why, there was to be five more years of saving before I could have got out, even if the sheep did well, which, at present, so Bob says, ain't the case. No, no, miss. Oh, I couldn't!"

But he went. He's there now. We three saw him off from the station, and Meg and her dad saw him off by the boat. And we get post-cards from him, and he and the sheep-farm are getting on well. And the stamp's in somebody or other's collection, and we wish them joy of it.

"Absolutely foolish," says Brenda. "A true philatelist would have *kept* it, of course."

"Fool or philatelist, eh?" grins Meg. "Well, if I got the chance over again, I know which I'd choose to do!"

Read the

Boys' & Girls' Picture Newspaper

A Complete Paper—every week—for Boys & Girls

How Kinema Pictures are Taken

By Captain P. A. Barron

WHEN you go to see the moving pictures at kinema theatres you must often wonder how the photographs are taken. If you have a camera of your own and know something about ordinary snapshot photography, you must realize that the people who take the wonderful kinema pictures have to overcome many difficulties.

For instance, you often see night scenes on the films, and this puzzles you because you know that photographs cannot be taken in the dark. You see people in rooms that are lighted by candles or lamps, and you know perfectly well that you could not take snapshots in such a dim light.

Probably you have seen moving pictures that have been taken under the earth in deep mines, others taken beneath the surface of the sea, and you may have seen some of aeroplanes flying thousands of feet up in the air.

Even if you know nothing about photography, these pictures seem very wonderful, but if you do know enough about cameras to realize the difficulties of using them successfully you must think the films that are shown to you are the most marvellous things in the world.

How is it Done?

Well, first you must understand that the work of taking kinema films is one of the biggest industries in the world at the present time. Millions of pounds are spent upon it, and hundreds of thousands of people are employed. It is said that more money is spent on films than on great ships and railways, or, indeed, on any of the other great industries. When you understand this you will see that many of the world's cleverest people spend their whole lives upon the work of taking the moving pictures which are shown all over the earth to-day.

There are big cities in America in which practically every man and woman is employed by the firms that make these films. Some of them act, some take, develop, and print the films, others build up and paint scenes. There are tailors and dressmakers who make costumes to suit any picture-story; builders, carpenters and electricians who sometimes build and light whole streets of houses, which are photographed and then pulled down again; and in some places there are menageries of wild beasts that are kept specially for the purpose of being photographed for the moving pictures.

The Kinema Studio

If you saw a kinema studio for the first time you would be very much surprised. Perhaps you thought that it would be very much like a theatre, with a stage upon which the actors and actresses would appear. It is not in the least like that. Probably it is a large building with a great many strange looking electric lamps, and a litter of all sorts of furniture, carpets, and pieces of painted scenery. If a picture is being taken, you may see at one corner of the building a portion of a beautifully furnished room. The walls may look like carved oak, and the furniture may be the best it is possible to buy. Every other part of the studio looks very rough and untidy, but this one little corner might be part of a king's palace.

The next thing that surprises you is that the actors and actresses speak while they are performing their parts. You are so accustomed to seeing them moving about silently on the screen that this strikes you as very strange. They talk, shout, laugh or cry just like people on the stage of a theatre. They learn their words from a book which is written for them by the author, for it has been found that they can act more naturally if they speak while they are being photographed.

Heaps of Practice Necessary

They act some of the scenes over and over again before the man with the camera takes the film. Every little action is practised.

If you expect to be able to watch them act a whole play, you will be very much disappointed, for you will not be able to understand the story at all. They may act two little scenes in the room, but the

scenes do not seem to be connected in any way. You do not understand this until you have been told that when the complete film is shown a lot of other scenes will come between these two, and that these may be taken anywhere, perhaps out of doors. When you watch a play in a kinema studio you think it is rather like reading a chapter of a book, then skipping a lot of other chapters and reading one somewhere in the middle. You do not know what is supposed to have happened between.

Saves Time and Trouble

If you think for a minute you will understand why kinema plays are acted in this way. You know when you see a film on the screen there may be first a scene inside a house, then one on board a ship, then in a forest. After these you may see inside the house again, and so on. You can understand that it would be very troublesome to take all the actors and actresses from one place to another and back again as the scenes changed, so the photographers take all the parts that are acted in the house at the same time, even though those parts may be at the beginning and end of the story. They work in the same way on the ship or in the forest.

Outdoor scenes do not, as a rule, require so much preparation, but a great deal of trouble may be taken to find suitable places. Perhaps the film producer travels many hundreds of miles in a motor car to find a lake, river, forest or mountain which will make a natural background for his story. When he has found the right place, the actors and actresses are taken to it, usually in cars, and perform their parts.

Work of Preparation

But sometimes a lot of work has to be done. If there is a scene in a forest it may be necessary to cut down a lot of trees in order to clear a space for the actors and the camera, and to get enough light. Perhaps wooden huts may be built, or special bridges made across streams. Often men are at work for weeks before a film is taken.

If one of the scenes is on board a ship, it is quite likely that the film producer will take all his company of actors and actresses on a big liner for a voyage, but very often he hires a ship specially for the purpose. Possibly he wishes one scene to be acted in one of the ship's cabins, but here he finds a difficulty, because there is not enough light in a real cabin. In this case he has two sides of a cabin built on the deck of the ship. The top and the other sides may be left open to the light.

He may build "dummy" railway carriages also when he wishes to show people inside a train. Perhaps he has the parts of the carriages that will show placed on a big motor lorry which is driven along while the photograph is being taken. This will give a very realistic effect, because the country through which the motor is passing will be seen through the windows of the "dummy" railway carriage. Photographs are not often taken in real trains because of the difficulty of getting enough light, but sometimes special studio carriages are made and attached to trains.

You begin to see that one of the great difficulties of film photography is to get enough light, because the little pictures are taken so quickly that they would be under-exposed if they were taken in places that were not specially built for the purpose.

To Get Night Effects

You may still be wondering how the photographs are taken at night. The answer is simple—they are not. Usually they are taken in daylight, or by artificial light, and the photographs are printed so that they look very dark, and may be tinted blue or green.

The scenes inside rooms that seem to be lighted only by lamps or candles are also taken by daylight or strong electric light. Sometimes the effects are not very good, for you may see, if you look carefully, that there are shadows that could not possibly be thrown by the lights in the room.

Photographs taken under the sea seem much more wonderful than any others. Perhaps you have seen divers who seem to be searching about on a wreck under water. There may be waving seaweed, so it all looks quite real. But that scene may have been acted in a studio on dry land. The wreck may be built for the purpose, and the seaweed made by the scene painters. The clever photographers may make the film look exactly as if it had been taken below water.

Photographing Under Sea

But sometimes photographs have really been taken under the sea. Some years ago

a wonderful ship was fitted out for this work. It carried an enormous tube with glass windows, and this tube could be let down into the water, with the photographer and his camera inside. In the tropics the sunlight is so strong that the light is quite bright under the water, so the kinema photographer was able to take beautiful pictures of seaweed, coral, and fish swimming about.

A Remarkable Picture

The most remarkable photograph ever taken under the sea was one of a man fighting a shark. It was done in this way:

First the body of a dead horse was let down into the sea where there were known to be many sharks. Of course this attracted the big, hungry fish, and the photographer in his tube under the water was able to photograph them.

Then some natives who are marvellously clever at diving jumped overboard with long knives clenched between their teeth, and stabbed the sharks as they swam about in front of the camera. Some of the natives had killed many sharks in this way before, and so did not think it was very wonderful. They were very astonished, however, when one of the white men in the ship dived into the water and fought a shark in the same way. It was a plucky thing to do, for the white man was not so accustomed to swimming under water as the natives.

Many other wonderful things could be told about kinema photographers. Some of them have photographed real wild beasts in jungles. In some cases this has been done by building iron cages big enough to hold the photographers and their cameras. These cages have been taken to the jungle and partly covered with foliage. Then the photographers have waited, perhaps day after day, until they have taken the portraits of the wild beasts that have come to see who is there.

Can you imagine yourself in a cage in a tropical jungle full of wild beasts? It must be rather too exciting to be described as pleasant!

Photographs of aeroplanes in flight are usually taken from other aeroplanes. Of course you know that during the war the officers of the Royal Air Force took the most wonderful photographs from the air, but kinema photographers who take pictures merely to amuse us often take risks that are almost as great as those of wartime.

The Enchanted River

By Irene M. Overton

There's a river rippling opal full of mystery and charm,
  Like a jewel set in magic gold it gleams
About the Isle of Fancy—it is wondrous wide and calm,
  And spanned by bridges made of rainbow dreams;
And, on the sparkling water, fairy boats float to and fro,
  All fashioned of rose petals pink and white;
The sails of filmy gossamer spread out—as breezes blow—
  Like silver glimmering thro' soft amber light

And, manned by elves and pixies in fine cloaks of emerald green,
  There glides a gorgeous barge of shining gold
Charmed from the hearts of buttercups—where sits the fairy Queen,
  Well guarded by twelve goblins grim and bold.
And up the flower-strewn river banks are torches all aflame—
  Long rows of stately poppies burning red—
And little coloured lanterns, where the glowworms for a game
  Pretend they're stars just fallen out of bed!

To reach the enchanted river you must travel there by night;
  First, pass the dusky wood where shadows creep,
And you'll see the things I've told of shining in the magic light,
  When you've crossed the silent fields of Happy Sleep.

The Black Tulip

By Alexandre Dumas

ON the 20th of August, 1672, the city of the Hague, always so lively, so neat and so trim, that one might believe every day to be Sunday, the city of the Hague, the capital of the Seven United Provinces, was swelling in all its arteries with a black and red stream of hurried, panting and restless citizens. With their knives in their girdles, muskets on their shoulders or sticks in their hands, they were pushing on to the Buitenhof, a terrible prison, where Cornelius de Witte, the brother of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, was confined.

Cornelius de Witte, warden of the dykes, ex-burgomaster of Dort, his native town, and member of the Assembly of the States of Holland, was forty-nine years of age, when the Dutch people, tired of the republic such as John de Witte, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, understood it, at once conceived a most violent affection for the Stadtholderate, which had been abolished for ever in Holland by the "Perpetual Edict" forced by John de Witte upon the United Provinces.

The brothers de Witte had been friendly with Louis XIV of France, whom the Dutch hated; and this was a point made against them by the new Stadtholder, young Prince William of Orange, only two-and-twenty, son of William II, and grandson, by his mother Mary Stuart, of Charles I of England.

When the Dutch people shouted for the Stadtholder to be restored to power, the Grand Pensionary bowed before their will. But Cornelius de Witte was more obstinate and stoutly refused to sign the act by which the office of Stadtholder was restored. Moved by the tears and entreaties of his wife, he at last complied, only adding to his signature the two letters V. C. (*Vi Coactus*) notifying thereby that he only yielded to force.

John de Witte derived no advantage from his ready compliance with the wishes of his fellow citizens. Only a few days after an attempt was made to stab him, in which he was severely although not mortally wounded. Finally the judges sentenced both brothers to exile, and this was the day on which John de Witte was coming to fetch his brother out of prison and out of Holland for good.

But his enemies had no notion of letting Cornelius (or John) escape so easily. The people thirsted for the de Wittes' blood, and nothing could secretly better suit William of Orange, eagerly waiting for the time when the people, by whom he was idolized, should have made of the bodies of the brothers the two steps over which he might ascend to the chair of Stadtholder.

The crowd, fierce and dangerous, surged tumultuously towards the prison; there seemed little hope that Cornelius de Witte, already helpless and broken from the torture to which he had been put in prison, would ever escape through it alive.

And yet the fuming crowd did not know that at that very moment, when they prepared to storm the Buitenhof, John de Witte had alighted from his coach with a servant and quietly walked across the courtyard of the prison. The turnkey, Gryphus, admitted him into the building, the doors of which were immediately closed again.

Ten yards farther on John de Witte met a lovely young girl of seventeen or eighteen, dressed in the national costume of the Frisian women. This was Rosa, the daughter of Gryphus.

"Oh, Mynheer John," she said anxiously, "I am afraid of the harm which they are going to do to your brother."

"Oh, yes," said de Witte. "You mean to speak of the people down below, don't you?"

"Do you hear them?"

"They are indeed in a state of great excitement; but when they see us perhaps they will grow calmer, as we have never done them anything but good."

"That's unfortunately no reason, except for the contrary," muttered the girl.

The Grand Pensionary proceeded to the cell of his brother, where, on a mattress, Cornelius was resting after having undergone the preparatory degrees of the torture. His wrists were broken and his fingers crushed; but after three days of agony he breathed freely now that he was condemned, not to death, but to exile.

John tenderly kissed his brother on the forehead.

"I have come to take you away, Cornelius. My coach is near the pond, and we must get there as quickly and quietly as possible, for we are not very popular and there are fears of a tumult."

The shouts of the populace could be heard outside. The brothers heard the angry cries, in the midst of their talk concerning some correspondence with the Marquis de Louvois, which, they knew, had only to be discovered to deliver them to death at the hands of the mob, who hated France.

Cornelius earnestly assured his brother that the letters would not be found.

"I have entrusted them to Cornelius Van Baerle, my godson, the tulip fancier of Dort, and he cannot betray our secret, for he does not know of the nature and importance of the deposit entrusted to him."

"It will be safer if they are destroyed," cried John. "There is still time to send my servant Craeke to him with instructions to burn the packet."

On a flyleaf torn from his Bible Cornelius wrote a note with his crushed fingers, though drops of blood oozed out on the white linen bandages as he pressed the pencil. Outside the mob were yelling fiercely, "Death to the traitors!" as they styled the two brothers.

Cornelius wrote:

"My dear Godson,—Burn the parcel which I have entrusted to you. Burn it without looking at it and without opening it, so that its contents may for ever remain unknown to yourself. Secrets of this description are death to those with whom they are deposited. Burn it, and you will have saved John and Cornelius de Witte.—Farewell, and love me,

"Cornelius de Witte.

"August 20th, 1672.'

Craeke immediately set forth with the dispatch.

"And now," said John, "let us be off, Cornelius."

Cautiously and quietly they left the prison, reached John's coach, and instructed the driver to make for the nearest city gate. They did not know that all the gates had been locked by the secret instructions of William of Orange, and that there was no escape for them from the infuriated mob.

THE TULIP-GROWER OF DORT

While, with the utmost cruelty, the crowd was murdering the brothers de Witte in the streets of the Hague and tearing their bodies to pieces, Craeke, little suspecting the fate of his master, was riding steadily to Dort.

He soon descried that cheerful city at the foot of a hill dotted with windmills, and presently came to the house of Doctor Van Baerle, the godson of Cornelius de Witte. Van Baerle lived all alone in this large house, studying flowers and insects, and particularly burying himself in one of the most elegant and expensive of the hobbies of his country and his age. He was an enthusiastic tulip grower.

It was the time when the Dutch and the Portuguese, rivalling each other in this branch of horticulture, had begun to idolize and almost worship that flower, which originally had come from the East.

Soon people from Dort to Mons began to talk of Mynheer Van Baerle's tulips; and his beds, pits, drying-rooms, and drawers of bulbs were visited as the galleries and libraries of Alexandria were by illustrious Roman travellers.

Van Baerle's father had left him plenty of money, and he spent this on his tulips. He had already produced three new specimens, the "Jan," the "Van Baerle" and the "Cornelius" (after his godfather). Van Baerle was truly beloved by everyone at Dort; everyone, that is, except his next-door neighbour, who, quite unknown to him, was his fierce and implacable enemy.

Isaac Boxtel, who lived in the next house, was also a tulip-grower; but he had neither the skill nor the wealth of Van Baerle, who easily outstripped him. Boxtel was madly jealous of his rival and successful competitor and burning to do him an injury. With his telescope he spied as often as possible on Van Baerle's house, hoping to discover some means whereby he could harm the doctor.

Just then the Tulip Society of Haarlem offered a prize for the production of the large black tulip without a spot of colour, a thing which had not yet been accomplished, and was considered impossible, as at that time there did not exist a flower of that species approaching even to dark-nut-brown. It was therefore generally said that the founders of the prize might just as well have offered two millions as a hundred thousand guilders, since no one would be able to gain it.

The tulip-growing world, however, was wildly excited; all their thoughts were engrossed by that grand black tulip, which was looked upon as a myth. Van Baerle was one of those who were struck with the idea, and he began slowly the necessary sowings and operations to reduce the tulips, which he had grown already, from red to brown and from brown to dark brown.

By this time he had produced a perfect nut-brown colour, and Boxtel, half mad with jealousy, spied on him almost all day long. Van Baerle was quite unconscious that he was watched and thought only of the black tulip, which he felt certain of growing the following spring. He never guessed that Boxtel's telescope had penetrated the glass walls of the dry-room where he had interviewed Cornelius de Witte months before, and that Boxtel had seen de Witte hand him the packet of papers, and seen him put them away among his most precious tulips.

On the 20th of August, 1672, at one o'clock, Cornelius was, therefore, in his dry-room, with his feet resting on the foot-bar of the table and his elbows on the cover, looking with intense delight on three suckers which he had just detached from the mother bulb, pure, perfect and entire, and from which was to grow that wonderful produce of horticulture which would render the name of Cornelius Van Baerle for ever illustrious.

"It shall be called," said Van Baerle delightedly to himself, "*Tulipa nigra Barlaeensis.*"

"Sir," said a servant, entering, "a messenger from the Hague. Craeke, the confidential servant of Mynheer van de Witte."

"Zounds!" said Cornelius. "What's the matter?"

"Sir," said Craeke, "you are requested to read this paper without losing one moment."

"All right, all right," said Cornelius. "Your paper shall be read." But for the moment he was much more interested in his precious bulbs and left the letter lying on the table.

UNDER ARREST

The next moment there was another interruption.

"Oh, sir, fly! Fly quick," cried Van Baerle's servant, rushing in again. "The house is full of the guards of the State come to arrest you. Jump out of the window and escape."

"But if I did so I should fall on my tulips and destroy them," said Cornelius. "That is unthinkable!"

His only thought was for his inestimable tulips. Looking about for a paper in which to wrap them, he noticed the fly-leaf from the Bible on which Cornelius had written the note from prison. Van Baerle took it without, in his confusion, remembering whence it came, folded in it the three bulbs, and secreted them in his bosom and waited.

At this very moment the soldiers, preceded by a magistrate, entered the room.

"Give up to us," said the magistrate, "the seditious papers which you secrete in your house."

"The seditious papers!" repeated Cornelius, quite dumbfounded and astonished. "I have none."

The magistrate took no notice of this denial. He must have had accurate information, for he went straight to the right drawer and took out the packet left by Cornelius de Witte. He would not believe that Van Baerle did not know the contents of the packet, and he promptly arrested the poor tulip-grower, put him in a coach as a prisoner of state, and had him driven at full gallop to the Hague.

This misfortune was, as you will have guessed, the mischievous work of Mynheer Isaac Boxtel. He had heard the news of the brothers de Witte being arrested on a charge of high treason, and quickly saw his chance of implicating his hated rival in their troubles by informing the magistrate about the mysterious packet of letters.

If Cornelius should be arrested there would necessarily be a great upset in his house, and, during the night after his arrest, no one would think of keeping watch over the tulips in his garden.

Now in that night Boxtel would climb over the wall and, as he knew the place of the bulb which was to produce the grand black tulip, he would filch it; and instead of flowering for Cornelius it would flower for him, Isaac; he also, instead of Van Baerle, would have the prize of a hundred thousand guilders, not to speak of the sublime honour of calling the new flower *Tulipa nigra Boxtellensis*.

But though Cornelius was arrested, Boxtel's plan did not fall out as he had intended, for though he stole into the house of his hated rival at dead of night and entered the dry-room, he could not find anywhere the bulb of the black tulip. This was not surprising, for the three precious suckers which were to produce the prize flower had gone, concealed in Van Baerle's clothing, to the Buitenhof, at the Hague.

THE JAILER'S DAUGHTER

It was about midnight when poor Van Baerle was locked up in the prison of the Buitenhof, in the very cell which his godfather had quitted only that morning. On the way which the despairing florist had to traverse to reach that cell he saw nothing but the face of a young girl.

She appeared at the narrow door of her room, which opened on the flight of stairs Cornelius was mounting; and, holding the lamp in her right hand, she at the same time lit up her pretty blooming face, surrounded by a profusion of rich wavy golden locks, whilst with her left she held her white nightdress closely over her breast, having been roused from her first slumber by the unexpected arrival of Van Baerle.

This vision lasted but a moment. Then Gryphus, the ferocious jailer, hurried Cornelius into his cell, and the young man threw himself on his bed but slept not. Hours passed, and behind the trees came the first pale beam of light. But it brought no hope, only fresh despair to the prisoner, for his window overlooked the gibbet on which, after killing them, the mob had hung the bleeding bodies of the brothers de Witte.

Cornelius uttered a cry of horror and terror. He sank on his bed with the cold sweat on his brow and murmured prayers for the souls of his godfather and the Grand Pensionary.

Then turning again to the concerns of earth, and having satisfied himself that he was alone in his dungeon, he drew from his breast the three bulbs of the black tulip and concealed them behind a block of stone, on which the traditional water-jug of the prison was standing, in the darkest corner of his cell.

Useless labour of so many years! Such sweet hopes crushed; his discovery was, after all, to lead to nought, just as his own career was to be cut short. Here in his prison there was not a trace of vegetation, not an atom of soil, not a ray of sunshine.

On the same evening Gryphus, as he brought the prisoner his mess, slipped on the damp flags whilst opening the door of the cell, fell on his arm and broke it just above the wrist. He uttered a cry and fainted.

At the noise of Gryphus's fall, and at the cry which escaped him, a hasty step was heard on the staircase, and immediately after a lovely apparition presented itself to the eyes of Cornelius.

It was the beautiful young Frisian, who, seeing her father stretched on the ground and the prisoner bending over him, uttered a faint cry, as, in the first fright, she thought Gryphus, whose brutality she well knew, had fallen in consequence of a struggle between him and the prisoner.

But one moment told her the true state of the case—that Cornelius, who was trained as a doctor, was helping and not injuring. Though the door of his cell stood open, he never thought of escape, but with Rosa's help he quickly and deftly set the arm of her father and put it into splints. Gryphus recovered during this operation but fainted again, and Rosa, saying, "Service for service, sir," urged Cornelius to escape while he could.

"But you would be accused of letting me go," said the tulip-grower.

"Never mind," said Rosa, blushing, "never mind that."

"You are very good, my dear child," replied Cornelius, "but I stay."

Then Gryphus began to recover his senses a second time, and Rosa helped him downstairs after he had locked the door again upon his prisoner.

The next day the judges came to the Buitenhof. Cornelius Van Baerle was tried on a charge of treason and sentenced to death, while Rosa, who had led the judges to his cell because of the accident to her father, tried to stifle her sobs.

"To-day, at twelve o'clock, you will die," said the judge.

A sob was heard behind the door, and when the judges went away, after telling the prisoner to be ready at noon, Rosa lingered.

"Oh, sir, sir!" she said; but sobs choked her.

"Don't weep so, Rosa," said the prisoner, "but help me in carrying out my last wish." He took the paper containing the three cherished suckers and held it out to her. "Rosa, I have loved flowers dearly, and I believe I have found the secret of the grand black tulip, for which the great prize is offered at Haarlem. I make you a present of these three bulbs, my dear, and you shall grow them and receive the money."

Rosa only cried bitterly while he gave her careful instructions for the proper growing of the suckers so that they would flower in the following May. On the last fly-leaf of Cornelius de Witte's Bible (which Rosa had kept after his death) he wrote out a will bequeathing the tulips to Rosa Gryphus.

Then he said a sad farewell to the Frisian maiden, for the time of execution was drawing very near.

REPRIEVED

But, after all, poor Van Baerle did not die that morning, though he was led forth to the gibbet as arranged. For as he laid his head on the fatal block and the executioner raised his sword, suddenly he felt gentle hands raising him and soon stood on his feet again, although trembling a little.

There was someone at his side reading a large parchment, sealed with a huge seal of red wax. His Highness, William, Prince of Orange, very likely afraid that Van Baerle's blood would turn the scale of judgment against him, had granted him his life. But he was condemned to perpetual imprisonment.

Cornelius heard this clause; but, the first feeling of vexation and disappointment over, he said to himself:

"Never mind, all is not lost yet; there is some good in this perpetual imprisonment; Rosa will be there, and also my three bulbs of the black tulip are there."

But Cornelius forgot that the Seven Provinces had seven prisons, one for each; and that the board of the prisoner is anywhere else less expensive than at the Hague, which is a capital.

He was sent to undergo his perpetual imprisonment at the fortress of Loevestein.

Amongst all the spectators whom Van Baerle's intended execution had attracted to the Buitenhof, none had shown a keener anxiety for his blood to flow than a certain respectably dressed burgher; he was no other than Mynheer Isaac Boxtel, who had come to the Hague to try if he could not get hold of the three suckers of the black tulip. But when he heard the pardon of the Stadtholder read out, Boxtel's fury was so great that he was no more like a human being. So, then Cornelius was to live and to go to Loevestein, and thither to his prison he would take with him his bulbs.

This, in fact, was exactly what happened. The next day the prisoner arrived at the fortress, and there all through the winter led the dreariest of lives.

One evening in the beginning of February, just when the stars were beginning to twinkle, Cornelius heard on the staircase a sound which thrilled through him. It was the sweet, harmonious voice of Rosa. The next moment the shutter in the grating in his cell door opened, and Rosa, beaming with joy after the parting of five months, pressed her little face against the wire grating saying to him:

"Oh, sir, sir! here I am. I contrived at last to see the Prince and begged him as a favour to allow my father to exchange his post at the Buitenhof with the jailer here at Loevestein. The Prince granted it, and so we are here, and I shall come to see you every day."

"Oh, my beautiful Rosa!" cried Van Baerle joyously, "do you love me a little?"

"A little," she said. "You make no great pretensions, Mynheer Cornelius."

Through the grating the tips of their fingers touched each other tenderly.

"Here is my father," said she.

Rosa then abruptly drew back from the door and ran to meet old Gryphus, who made his appearance at the top of the staircase.

But before doing so she whispered to Van Baerle:

"At nine o'clock this evening."

Cornelius waited eagerly to hear the hour strike. Punctually to the minute Rosa appeared at the little grated window with a light.

She explained: "My father falls asleep immediately after supper every evening, just a little drunk, and, thanks to this nap, I shall be able to come for an hour every evening without

his guessing. Now Mynheer Cornelius, I have brought back to you your bulbs."

Cornelius' heart leaped with joy. Rosa looked so exceedingly pretty that for the second time Cornelius placed his forehead and lips against the wire grating; of course we must presume with the laudable desire to thank the young lady. But Rosa was so confused by this that she turned and fled, having completely forgotten to return to the prisoner the three bulbs of the black tulip.

THE FIRST SUCKER

Next evening the jailer's daughter came again to the grating and tendered to him the three bulbs, which were still wrapped up in the same paper. But to her great astonishment Van Baerle pushed them back.

"Listen to me," he said. "We must take every precaution to succeed with the black tulip. You shall plant one sucker in the prison garden and tend it carefully. You will give me another, which I will try to grow here in my cell; it will help me to beguile the long, weary hours, though I have very little hope that it will grow up and flower. However, the sun sometimes visits me. The third sucker you shall keep in reserve as our last resource in case the other two fail. Then we are sure to gain the hundred thousand guilders and have the supreme happiness of rearing the black tulip."

"I will bring you soil for your bulb little by little," said Rosa, "and you must tell me exactly how to grow mine."

"You must take great care of it," said Van Baerle anxiously. "You comprehend, my dear Rosa, that someone might steal a bulb worth a hundred thousand guilders."

"No one ever enters the garden but myself."

Every evening Rosa brought, handful by handful, the soil for Cornelius' sucker. A large jug, which he had skilfully broken, did service as a flower pot, and at the beginning of April he planted a sucker in the jug.

Not a day passed on which Rosa did not come to have her chat with Cornelius. Van Baerle discovered that the girl could not read, and he began to give her daily lessons in the Bible of his godfather while Rosa held the light.

Meanwhile his tulip did pretty well, and Rosa carefully prepared the garden soil for the one she was to plant. One evening, however, she arrived half an hour late, and told Cornelius that she had been delayed by an acquaintance of her father's who had fallen into the habit lately of visiting the jailer and plying him with drink.

Cornelius was immediately uneasy.

"He may be some spy," he said, "one of those who are sent into jails to watch both prisoners and their keepers."

"It is me he is spying after," said Rosa, smiling. "This Mynheer Jacob Gisels is my suitor."

Cornelius hardly knew whether to be relieved or jealous at this information. Rosa asked quickly after his tulip.

"Oh, Rosa, only imagine my joy. To-day I saw the first sprouting of the leaves. I have great hopes. Now on the first fine day you must plant yours; but whatever you do, let nobody help you, and lock up very carefully the third and last sucker."

Rosa was listening uneasily.

"I thought I heard a step creaking on the staircase," she said. And as she hurried downstairs she plainly heard a door quickly closed below.

The following day passed without any remarkable incident. Gryphus made his three visits and discovered nothing. He never came at the same hours, as he hoped thus to discover the secrets of the prisoner. Van Baerle, therefore, had devised a contrivance, a sort of pulley, by means of which he was able to lower or to raise his jug below the ledge of tiles and stone before his window.

Gryphus suspected nothing, and the device succeeded for eight days. One morning, however, when Cornelius, absorbed in the contemplation of his bulb, from which a germ of vegetation was already peeping forth, had not heard old Gryphus coming upstairs, as a gale of wind was blowing which shook the whole tower, the door suddenly opened.

When Gryphus saw the tulip he was mad with rage that a prisoner should break the rules of the jail. Never heeding Van Baerle's agonized protests, he seized the jug, tore out the bulb, and crushed it to atoms under his heavy shoe.

Van Baerle uttered a dreadful cry. It was echoed by Rosa, who had heard the noïse and rushed upstairs.

"For shame, my father!" the girl cried.

"A curse on you!" Cornelius exclaimed, quite beyond himself with despair as he gathered, with his trembling fingers, the remnants of that bulb on which he had rested so many joys and so many hopes.

"We shall plant the other to-morrow, my dear Mynheer Cornelius," said Rosa in a low voice, who understood the intense grief of the unfortunate tulip-fancier, and who, with the pure, sacred love of her innocent heart, poured these kind words, like a drop of balm, on the bleeding wounds of Cornelius.

THE SECOND SUCKER

In the evening Rosa came back. She told Cornelius that Mynheer Jacob, when he heard of the destruction of the tulip, had been very angry and had rated him soundly for his brutal action.

"Oh! what a worthy man is this Master Jacob," muttered Cornelius, "an honest soul, an excellent heart, that he is."

"The truth is that it is impossible to treat a man more rudely than he did my father; he was really quite in despair, repeating, over and over again: 'Crushed, crushed the bulb; my God, my God! Crushed!' Then, turning

towards me, he asked, 'But it was not the only one that he had?'"

"Did he ask that?" inquired Cornelius with some anxiety. "This Mr. Jacob of yours is a villain, it seems. He is watching you, I fear, but it is not you he is in love with. He is after my bulb, and is in love with my tulip!"

"You don't say so!" said Rosa.

"We can soon test it. Go to-morrow into the garden, taking care Jacob knows you are going. Feign to put the bulb in the ground; leave the garden; but look through the keyhole of the door and watch him."

The next day Rosa carried out this little ruse as directed; and when Cornelius heard that Jacob Gisels had followed her stealthily and, as soon as she had gone, dug frantically in the ground for the precious sucker he supposed she had planted there, the tulip-grower was quite sure that his precious bulb was threatened.

"To-morrow," said Cornelius, "to-morrow you must secretly plant your bulb so that Jacob does not know. And as to the third sucker, watch over it as a miser over his first or last piece of gold, or a mother over her child. Watch over it, Rosa! Some voice within me tells me that it will be our saving."

Then he talked so eloquently of the care that must be given to the tulip that at last Rosa burst into tears.

"I see," she said angrily, "that you love your tulips with such love as to have no room in your heart left for other affections."

With which jealous speech she fled, and Cornelius lay long awake that night for fear she would not come again

DESERTED

The fears of Cornelius came true. Rosa was so vexed with his absorption in his black tulip that she came no more, though the prisoner watched for hours every evening. He had no news either of her or of his precious flower, and by the fourth day he was dumb with grief and pale from want of appetite. He had hardly touched his meals.

The next day he was worse still, and Gryphus took a gloomy account of him downstairs to Rosa.

"He doesn't drink, he doesn't eat, he doesn't leave his bed. He will get out of it, like Mynheer Grotius, in a chest; only the chest will be a coffin."

Rosa grew as pale as death.

"Ah!" she said to herself, "he is uneasy about his tulip."

With a heavy heart she slowly and laboriously wrote as well as she was able:

"Be easy. Your tulip is going on well," and slipped it under Cornelius' door at night.

Cornelius wrote a reply:

"It was not my anxiety about the tulip which has made me ill, but grief at not seeing you."

This touched Rosa's heart, and at last, on the eighth evening, she came again.

"Your tulip has been in the ground for six days," she reported. "For safety from Jacob I have planted it in a pot in my bedroom and keep the door always locked. I put it in a sunny window at just the hours you told me. Your tulip is like my daughter. Only by becoming its mother," Rosa added smilingly, "can I cease to be its rival."

Cornelius most affectionately kissed her hands through the grating.

"I love you above everything in this world," he said.

Two days later the Frisian maiden joyfully reported that the tulip had pushed fully two inches above the soil. From that hour every day marked some progress in the growth of the flower. At one time it was that the leaves had opened out, and at another that the flower itself had formed.

Cornelius trembled with joy, and still more so two days later, when he heard that the flower was beginning to open.

"And its colour?" he asked, trembling.

"Black as the ink with which I wrote to you," Rosa answered.

Cornelius uttered a cry of mad joy.

"Rosa, you have done so much for me! My tulip is about to flower and it will flower black. Rosa! Rosa! You are the most perfect being on earth."

"After the tulip," said Rosa mischievously, but without anger.

"When it is open," Cornelius continued excitedly, "place it carefully in the shade, and immediately send a message to Haarlem to the President of the Horticultural Society that the grand black tulip is in flower. Or go yourself, Rosa, and do not be separated for a single instant from the flower."

The next night Rosa told him that the black tulip was so nearly out that she might find it in bloom on her return to her room that evening. And a little later she actually came back again with a dark lantern and in her other hand the miraculous tulip in full bloom.

She held up both lantern and flower to the grating for Cornelius to see.

The tulip was beautiful, splendid, magnificent; its stem was more than eighteen inches high, it rose from out of four green leaves which were as smooth and straight as iron lance heads. The whole of the flower was as black and shining as jet.

"Rosa," said Cornelius, almost gasping. "Rosa, the President at Haarlem must know at once."

THE RIVAL

Yet, if the two poor, joyful young people had only known it, they were never in such danger as in the hour of their triumph.

The reader cannot but have recognized in Jacob our old friend, or rather enemy, Isaac Boxtel, and has guessed, no doubt, that this worthy had followed, from the Buitenhof to Loevestein, the object of his love and the object

of his hatred the black tulip and Cornelius Van Baerle.

He saw Rosa conveying a large flower-pot of white earthenware from her father's kitchen to her bedroom. He saw Rosa washing in pails of water her pretty little hands, begrimed as they were with the mould which she had handled, to give her tulip the best soil possible.

And at last he hired, just opposite Rosa's window, a little attic, distant enough not to allow him to be recognized with the naked eye, but sufficiently near to enable him, with the help of his telescope, to watch everything that was going on at Loevestein in Rosa's room, just as at Dort he had watched the dry-room of Cornelius.

From there he watched the tulip, and soon had no doubt that this was a second sucker of the precious black bulb. It was then that Isaac made up his mind to steal Rosa's tulip. He contrived secretly to make a key which fitted the door of Rosa's room. Then he only waited to make sure that the tulip would really flower black. On the night when Rosa showed the bloom to the prisoner Boxtel saw her take it towards Van Baerle's cell and guessed at once that it was now open.

By eleven o'clock, thanks to the whisky Boxtel brought into the prison, Gryphus was dead drunk. That night Boxtel listened with a beating heart outside Rosa's door with the false key in his hand.

Meanwhile Cornelius remained standing in his cell, overpowered with happiness, which broke suddenly when, as dawn lit up the casement, Rosa rushed to the grating with dreadful news for the prisoner.

"Cornelius, the tulip! Someone has taken it -stolen it from my room! I never let the key out of my possession—there must have been a false one."

She was nearly choking with sobs. Cornelius, full of consternation, only muttered:

"Stolen, stolen, stolen; I am lost!" Then he recovered himself and cried: "Rosa, Rosa, we know the thief; it is Jacob—that infamous Jacob. Shall we allow him to carry to Haarlem the fruits of our labour? We must overtake him."

Rosa kissed her hands to her friend. Struck with a bright thought she rushed towards the staircase, saying:

"All is not yet lost, my Cornelius. Rely on me!"

Meanwhile Boxtel had arrived at Delft, where he packed the bulb with great care in a box of moss for the rest of the journey.

He arrived next morning at Haarlem, fatigued but triumphant; and, to do away with every trace of the theft, he transplanted the tulip, and, breaking the original flower-pot, threw the pieces into the canal. After which he wrote the President of the Horticultural Society a letter in which he announced to him that he had just arrived at Haarlem with a perfectly black tulip; and, with his flower all safe, took up his quarters at a good hotel in the town, and there he waited

ROSA SEES THE PRESIDENT

Rosa, on leaving Cornelius, had fixed on her plan, which was no other than to restore to Cornelius the stolen tulip or never see him again. Fast as Boxtel travelled to Haarlem, she was not far behind him. Only four hours after he arrived there she caused herself to be led before Mynheer Van Herysen, the President of the Horticultural Society of Haarlem. Two hours earlier this gentleman had seen the black tulip, and when Rosa was announced he was drawing up a report to the committee of the society about it. Thinking her a servant of Isaac Boxtel, he asked her if the tulip was doing well.

"Alas! sir, I don't know," said Rosa.

"How is that? Could any misfortune have happened to it?"

"A very great one, sir; yet not to it, but to me."

"What?"

"It has been stolen from me."

"Stolen! The black tulip!"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know the thief?"

"I have my suspicions, but I must not yet accuse anyone."

"You mean," said Herysen impatiently, "that Mynheer Boxtel's tulip has been stolen."

Rosa stared; she had never heard the name.

"Oh, sir," she cried, "this Boxtel, who calls himself the owner of the tulip, is he not a very thin man, bald, with sunken eyes, stooping and bow-legged?"

"Quite true," said Van Herysen; but he still refused to believe that the black tulip which Boxtel had shown him could have been stolen from this humble Frisian maiden.

"Go, my child," he said at last, "and settle matters with Master Isaac Boxtel at the White Swan Inn."

Just then a great noise was heard in the street and loud cheers shook the house. The staircase was invaded up to the very landing-place by a crowd of people who were accompanying, or rather following, a young man, simply clad in a coat of violet-coloured velvet, embroidered with silver, who, with a certain aristocratic slowness, ascended the shining white stone steps of the house.

Van Herysen began to bow before his visitor, William, Prince of Orange, who had come to hear all about the wonderful black tulip. Van Herysen told him how Isaac Boxtel had arrived with it and how it was now claimed by Rosa Gryphus, a Frisian maiden.

The Prince was interested

"Question her, Mynheer Van Herysen," he said. "I am the first magistrate of the country. I will hear the case and administer justice. But do not say who I am; call me plain mynheer."

When he entered the room all Rosa's attention was fixed on the important President, and she scarcely noticed the humble stranger following the master of the house, who, pretending to read a book, watched her so carefully.

Rosa begged that she might be confronted with Mynheer Boxtel and his tulip. An officer went off to fetch him, and meanwhile, in answer to questions from Van Herysen, she told how she had so carefully planted and grown the sucker in her own room on behalf of a poor prisoner of Loevestein. All this was detailed with an accent of truth which, although producing no change in the impassive mien of the Prince, did not fail to take effect on Van Herysen.

At this moment Boxtel entered, followed by two men bearing the precious tulip in a box. They waited in the adjoining room.

"It is he!" cried Rosa, hearing the voice of Boxtel. The Prince signed to her to go and look through the open door.

"It is my tulip," cried Rosa. "I recognize it."

The Prince rose and went to the door, and at that moment, it seemed to Rosa, she knew him. The next moment Boxtel, seeing William, started back.

"His Highness!" he called out, and Rosa echoed the words with dismay. Then Boxtel perceived Rosa and immediately became confused.

"Here," said the Stadtholder, "is a young damsel who pretends to have found your black tulip."

Boxtel, with a disdainful smile, shrugged his shoulders.

"I say that this damsel lies, your Highness. This is a tale she has concocted with her lover, a prisoner at Loevestein. His name is Cornelius Van Baerle, and he is the godson of that villain Cornelius de Witte."

The Prince gave a start; his generally quiet eye flashed.

He spoke to Rosa. "It was, then, to follow this man that you came to me at Leyden to solicit for the transfer of your father."

"Yes, your Highness," murmured Rosa. Turning to Boxtel she suddenly asked:

"How many suckers were there of your tulip?"

Boxtel, guessing, answered:

"Three."

"What has become of these suckers?"

"Oh! what has become of them? Well, one has failed; the second has produced the black tulip."

"And the third?"

"The third?"

"The third—where is it?"

"I have it at home," said Boxtel, quite confused.

"You lie!" cried Rosa, "for here it is." And she drew it from her bosom. "Here it is, in the very same paper in which it was wrapped up, together with the two others, when Cornelius gave them to me before being led to the scaffold. Take it, your Highness—take it."

And Rosa, unfolding the paper, gave the bulb to the Prince. Then suddenly she saw some lines written on the paper which Cornelius' teaching now made her able to read.

"Read, your Highness, for heaven's sake, read!" she cried breathlessly.

And William of Orange read that last letter from Cornelius de Witte to his godson which made it quite clear that Van Baerle had not known the nature of the papers deposited with him and therefore had been wrongfully accused. It also proved, since it had wrapped the suckers, that they must really have belonged to the prisoner of Loevestein and not to Boxtel.

The Prince was silent for a while. Then he said: "Go, Mr. Boxtel. Justice shall be done." And to Van Heryeen: "Take charge of this young woman and of the tulip. Good-bye."

CONCLUSION

The Prince was as good as his word. He immediately sent for Cornelius Van Baerle to come to Haarlem under escort, and when he was confronted with Boxtel and the black tulip the thief was so stricken with shock that, crushed by the failure of his hopes, he fell, senseless, on the ground. When they picked him up he was dead.

The Prince announced to the assembled citizens, gathered to do honour to the flower, that the tulip would bear the name of its producer.

"It will be called," he said, "*Tulipa nigra Rosa Barlaeensis*, which will henceforth be the name of this damsel."

And at the same time William took Rosa's hand and placed it in that of Cornelius, whom he pronounced a free man. The Prince continued:

"I give to Rosa the sum of a hundred thousand guilders, which she has fairly earned. They are the reward of her love, her courage and her honesty."

Rosa and Cornelius were married soon afterwards and Van Baerle made his peace with surly old Gryphus and appointed him to watch over his tulips at Dort.

And to ward off any envious attempts of another Isaac Boxtel, Cornelius wrote over his door the lines of Grotius, a former prisoner at Loevestein:

"One has sometimes suffered enough to have a right ever afterwards to say, I am too happy."

That French Kid

By PETER MARTIN

"SICKENING, I call it," said Keith.

"Absolutely feeding!" agreed his brother James, who, owing to the fact that his second name was Bertram, would answer up indiscriminately to J. B., Jimmy, Bert or Jim.

"Just when we've got the tent rigged up!" pursued Keith.

"And lugged all the bedding stuff down there," said Jim.

"And got the stone fireplace built and bought the gipsy pot to do our cooking in, and bagged the pail out of the kitchen when cook wasn't looking, and all those knives and spoons and things," lamented Keith.

"What the dickens did it have to go and be the *summer* hols for?" sighed Jim. "If it had only been Easter or Christmas it wouldn't have been so bad."

"Not quite so bad," amended Keith. "Though it would have been a bit putrid even then. Girls do get in the way so when you want to do things."

For that was the trouble—a girl; and a French girl at that! That is to say, half of her was French. A good bit more than half, you might say—for not only was her father a Frenchman, but she had been born in France, and had lived in France all her life. The only thing the least bit English about her was her mother, who was half-sister to the father of the two Kennedy boys. All the rest of her was as French as French could be, including her name—Jacqueline Yvonne Avril de Courcette. Fancy having to say all that to your friends when you wanted to introduce her!

What made the visit of this French cousin so specially annoying just now was that Keith and Jim were just home from school for the summer holidays, and had fixed up no end of tophole things to do. They had rigged up a tent beside a stream in a wood a mile or so from their home, and they had persuaded their father to let them camp out there for a fortnight if the weather kept fine. They had always wanted to camp out, but had never been allowed to do so before, their mother being one of the anxious kind—always afraid they'd get rheumatism or pneumonia or something of that sort if they got cold or damp, you know. But this year their mother happened to be away from home. She had gone to stop with Jacqueline's mother over in France, who was, as I have already mentioned, Mr. Kennedy's sister, and Keith and Jim had taken advantage of her absence to wring permission out of their father to allow the camping-out.

And then, just when everything was nicely arranged, came the bolt from the blue. Mrs. Kennedy and Jacqueline's father and mother suddenly took it into their heads to go off on a motor tour round France to look at castles and ruins and things. And as they thought ruins might be rather boring to Jacqueline, and as they wanted to take a chauffeur and five in the car would be rather a crush, Mrs. Kennedy had written home to say that Jacqueline was coming to spend a month or five weeks in England and to make the acquaintance of her English cousins while her own people were away.

And as Jacqueline's English cousins had no sisters to take the kid off their hands, it meant that they'd got to put up with her hanging round all the time—as Keith grumblingly put it—and all their plans for a really jolly, care-free sort of holiday were in the melting-pot.

Not that they meant to give up the camping altogether. Mr. Kennedy suggested that they could still sleep out if they wanted to do so, and Jacqueline Yvonne could come and spend the day-time down at the camp with them. So the nights wouldn't be spoilt much. But the days would be absolutely ruined, of course, for they would have to be spent doing the polite to a girl who, being French, was sure to wear silk stockings and high-heeled shoes and probably loathed sitting on the grass, and very possibly couldn't speak a word of English into the bargain.

"It will just about put the lid on everything if we have to go about jabbering French all day long," Jim said gloomily.

"*You* wouldn't be able to go about jabbering French, whatever happened!" said Keith with scorn. "You only got five out of a hundred for French in the end of term exams."

"Well, you can't talk! You didn't get so very many yourself if it comes to that," Jim replied with spirit.

"I got forty, anyway. Enough for a pass," said Keith. But he said it cautiously, for it was common knowledge at Wandle, where the two brothers were at school together, that Keith had once been publicly told by the Head that his French would have disgraced a prep kid and was an absolute scandal in the Shell. And he added hastily, to distract Jim's attention and make him forget the retort courteous that was trembling on his lips:

"Perhaps she knows the deaf and dumb alphabet or the Morse code or something, so that we shall be able to talk to her by signs. Let's cut off down to the camp, J.B., and see that everything's all right. We can go round by the village and lay in a few things to eat on our way down."

They cut—and stayed away as long as possible, not going home until nearly supper-time. When they did make their way back eventually, they found that their father and cousin had already arrived, having caught an earlier train than they had expected. But Jacqueline Yvonne had been so tired from her journey that she had gone straight to bed, so, to their great relief, the boys found that they would not have to make her acquaintance that night.

"They crossed by the night boat and she was too excited to go to sleep," Mr. Kennedy told his sons. "She seems a jolly little kid. Chattered no end on the way down; though she must have been fagged out. I told her about your camp, and she was very interested. Spending the night out to-night, are you? Well, I'll bring her down after breakfast to-morrow if she's quite recovered from her journey, and leave her with you."

"One night's reprieve, anyway," Keith muttered under his breath. And as soon as supper was finished he suggested to his brother that they should gather together the few things they still needed and go down to the tent and turn in.

"So's to have a nice jolly long night to ourselves before the French kid comes along," he said.

The night was certainly a long one—though whether or not it could truthfully be described as "jolly" depends upon your taste. If you *like* to have your tent collapse on the top of you in the middle of your slumbers, if you *enjoy* sleeping under insufficient coverings upon hard, bumpy ground which finds out every bone in your body, and reminds you of the tortures victims must have suffered in days of old upon the rack, if you don't object to being awakened soon after dawn by early-rising mosquitoes who are annoyed at finding you still sleeping, and do their best to make you aware of their annoyance—well, then perhaps you would describe the first night the boys spent in camp as "jolly." Keith and Jim did their best to pretend to themselves and to one another that they had enjoyed it. But they both felt very tired and cross in the morning, and the discovery that there had been a slight shower of rain at daybreak which had damped the wood they had gathered overnight for their fire, so that it wouldn't catch alight, didn't make them feel very much more jovial.

"Oh, dash! Oh, well, we just shan't be *able* to have bacon and tea for breakfast this morning then—that's all," said Keith as he flung away the empty box after he had struck the last match and still the wood refused to burn.

"What shall we do, then? Go home for breakfast?" asked Jim.

"We could, of course. Only if we do we shall have to play the polite to that French kid," said Keith.

"Bother! So we shall. What a nuisance the girl is!" said Jim.

"We were chumps not to have brought more than one box of matches. Only I never dreamt we should want more than one full box the first night. It was wasting so many when the tent came down, I suppose. Tell you what, Jim. Let's open that tin of corned beef we got for dinner and have our breakfast off that."

"What shall we have for dinner, though, if we do? We arranged to have a cold dinner first day, you know, in case we made a mess of the cooking with that French kid looking on," Jim reminded his brother.

"We shall have to risk making a mess of it. We'll scoot off to the village as soon as the shops are open and buy a piece of meat and a fresh supply of matches. Come on, chuck the tin-opener over here and I'll fork the stuff out. It won't be as nice as the fried bacon and the hot tea would have

been, but it will be better than going home. It's on the cards, you know, that Jacqueline Yvonne will still be too tired to come out, and if we keep out of the way, there's just a chance that we'll escape her for a bit longer," Keith explained.

Jim agreed that the chance was worth taking. And the two boys breakfasted off corned beef and cold water and tried not to think of the hot coffee and ham and eggs and fried bacon and toast and marmalade that would be upon the breakfast-table at home. As soon as they thought there was a possibility of the shops being open, they set off to the village to replenish their stores, and bought a pièce of salted beef which the butcher assured them would make quite a nice joint to boil in their pot. In addition they got a good supply of matches and a bundle or two of dry firewood, and some carrots and onions and potatoes to cook along with the joint, and another tin of the corned beef—just in case.

The fire burnt up well this time, and Jim filled the big black gipsy pot with water from the stream which ran close beside their camping-ground, and put it on to boil, while Keith washed and scraped the vegetables in the pail they had "borrowed."

Neither of them had the least idea of how long their dinner would take to cook, but as the water in the pot was beginning to bubble, they decided to put the things on at once.

"We can always take them off if we find they're getting done too quickly," Keith said, as he plunged meat and potatoes, onions and carrots into the pot together.

"Let's time 'em, shall we, and see just how long they do take? Then we'll know for certain another day," Jim said, and Keith, agreeing that this would be a good idea, dived into the tent in search of his watch, which he had not put into his pocket as yet.

"That's funny. I could have sworn I left it under my pillow this morning," he remarked, as he rummaged about amongst the bedclothes without bringing any watch to light.

"I expect it got shoved aside somewhere when the tent came down," said Jim. "Let's take the bedding outside and shake it well. I dare say it will turn up then."

But it didn't. The boys searched the tent most carefully, but they could not discover the slightest sign of any watch.

"We must have kicked it away somewhere when we were wrestling with the tent," said Jim.

"We couldn't have done! I had it this morning. I looked at the time when we woke up, and again after breakfast. I left it under my pillow because it drops out of my pocket sometimes when I'm bending over things, and I thought it would be safer if I left it there," Keith said.

"Well, it's gone, anyway," said Jim.

"I'm afraid it has," sighed Keith sorrowfully, for the watch was rather a cherished possession of his. "I suppose I didn't leave it under my pillow after all. I must have put it into my pocket and dropped it somewhere, and goodness only knows if I shall ever find it again."

"We may come upon it accidentally sometime," Jim said consolingly. "It's a bother losing it, though, for now we shan't know what the time is. Oh, dash these mosquitoes! I shall be eaten alive soon if they keep on at me like this."

"They are rather awful, aren't they? Let's clear out for a bit and leave 'em to it. Perhaps when the fire's been burning awhile they'll find it too warm and go away. Let's go down to the village again and see if Glosson's mended that old ticker of yours yet? It isn't much good, I know. But if he's got the hands on we'll be able to tell some sort of time by it. We'll be rather in the soup without a watch of any sort or kind."

"Righto! It ought to be done by this time. Glosson's had it a whole week, and we shall get away from the mosquitoes. Let's put this great chunk of green wood on the fire while we're gone. Then the fire will stay alight and perhaps the smoke will drive the brutes away."

Once more the two campers sallied forth into the little town, where they were glad to find that the local watchmaker had repaired Jim's watch after a fashion, so that they were able to bring it away with them. Then back again to the tent they sped, speculating, as they went, as to whether or not they would find that "French kid" awaiting their arrival.

"If she isn't there, we'll have dinner as soon as ever it's cooked. Then, if she still hasn't come, I should think we might feel quite safe and go off for the day somewhere," Keith said.

But when they came in sight of the wood in which their tent was pitched, they saw a little stumpy figure sitting upon the stile over which they had to go. It was a girl, a very English-looking girl, with a

freckled, rather plain little face and sandy-coloured hair, shoulder length—and she was dressed in a very English sort of fashion in a rather ugly reddish-coloured overall, evidently intended for real hard wear, and the thickest of thick black stockings and the stoutest of small black shoes. She grinned at the two boys in a very friendly English manner as they came up.

"Hello! Are you Keith and Jim? I'm Jack," she announced.

The two boys stared at her.

"Jack who?" asked Jim in bewilderment.

"Jack de Courcette, silly, of course," replied the girl.

"Oh! Are you Jacqueline?" cried Keith.

"Jacqueline Yvonne Avril de Courcette?" asked Jim.

"Yes, if you like that better," said the girl. "I don't, myself. At home I'm always called Jack."

"But—but you're English. I—we—we thought you were French," stammered Keith in confusion.

"I'm both," said the girl. "When I am in France I am French; but when I come to England I am English." Then, as she saw her cousins regarding her still dubiously, she grinned at them again.

"Don't look so frightened! I'm not going to speak a word of French all the time I'm here—unless I forget, or unless we start quarrelling. I always quarrel in French, you can speak snappy things so much more quickly. But as we've not yet reached the quarrelling stage, I shall talk English at present. Uncle brought me as far as here, and we were just in time to see your heels disappearing round the corner. Uncle didn't know whereabouts you'd pitched your tent, and he wanted to meet somebody who was coming to see him on business, so I said I'd sit on the stile and wait till you came back, for uncle was sure you were only going into the village to do some shopping. Do take me to your camp now. I'm longing to see it. Mother and father and I have often camped out in the summer, and I love it. And look—I've got some cakes and fruit in this basket. Your cook gave them to me for our dinner. I'm to stay and have dinner here with you, and we're all to go back to your house for supper to-night. Uncle says he expects you'll be in need of a properly-cooked meal by that time. Which way do we go? Over this stile?"

"Yes," said Keith, coming forward dutifully to help his cousin mount it. But Jack was over before he could so much as proffer his aid, and the three of them walked along the green ride that wound through the wood, the girl chattering merrily, the boys subdued and silent, not knowing what to make of this sturdy, English-looking person who was so utterly different from the languid, foreign, overdressed young lady they had expected.

"You talk English awfully well," said Keith at length. "However did you learn to speak it like that? I thought you'd never been in England?"

"Nor I have. But mother is English, you know, and she's always made me talk to her in English ever since I was quite a little thing. Father's half English, too. His mother was English, and he likes talking English best. And I go to a school where most of the girls come from England; and though we're all supposed to speak French all the time, we don't when we're alone. I've learnt lots of English slang words at school. Oh, is that your camp? How sweet—only you've got your tent just not quite right, you know. It might come down in the night if you leave it like that. Would you like me to show you how it ought to go? I've often helped my father put up a tent. If you wouldn't think it interfering of me, I could give you lots of tips about camping out."

"Thank you," said Keith, not quite sure whether he thought it interfering or not. It was a little annoying to have a girl-cousin—especially a girl-cousin from France—telling you how to put up tents and giving you hints about camping out. On the other hand, it might be rather useful to have a few tips. Last night hadn't been very comfortable, and the tent *had* come down. Perhaps it would be wiser to swallow the humiliation of receiving instruction from a girl and accept her aid.

"Thank you," he said again. "We should be glad if you would. The tent did come down last night—we had rather a rotten night of it, one way and another, what with that and not having enough blankets and the ground being so hard and the mosquitoes."

"Mosquitoes bad, are they? In the morning, I suppose. That's because you've got your tent under trees and too near water. If you were to pitch it out there in the open, you wouldn't find them half so bad. What's that smell? Is something burning?"

"Oh dear! I hope it isn't the meat

"She reached him just as he was disappearing through a fence, and she clutched valiantly at his coat"—p 216

Drawn by Francis Hiley

we've got in the pot for our dinner!" cried Keith in alarm.

"Have you some meat on? That's what it is, then. I expect the water's all boiled away. Get some more, quick, and let's put it in. And, I say, hadn't you better fix the flap of the tent back? It will be in the fire and catch alight in another moment." And Jack rushed forward, picked up a spoon which was lying handy, and struggled to lift the lid off the gipsy pot to see what was happening within it.

Jim seized cook's pail and hurried to the stream to fetch some more water, while Keith secured the flap of the tent, which had somehow got loose and was fluttering about in dangerous nearness to the fire.

"I wonder how it got loose?" the boy was beginning to say, when he was interrupted by a cry from his cousin, who had the lid off the pot by this time and was feeling about amongst the burnt mess at the bottom with the spoon.

"Meat? My word! but there's no meat here in this pot!" she exclaimed, speaking almost tragically in her astonishment. "It can't have boiled away, surely! Are you sure you put any in?"

"Yes, certain. It must be there," said Keith, as he and Jim left their occupations and hurried to look.

"Well, there's none here now," said Jack.

There certainly wasn't. There was nothing in the pot at all except a few potatoes that had boiled themselves to bits and were stuck together in a burnt mass

at the bottom of the pot. Meat, carrots and onions had all disappeared.

"What's happened to them? Have they boiled themselves away with the water? Could they have done that?" asked Keith in bewilderment.

"No, they couldn't. There would have been something left of them," Jack assured them. Then suddenly she gave a shout.

"Look!" she cried. And following the direction of her pointing spoon, the two boys caught a glimpse of a big ruffianly-looking fellow just disappearing through the trees.

"A tramp! He must have taken our dinner while we were down the village!" cried Keith, and he and Jim rushed through the undergrowth towards the place where they had caught the glimpse of the tramp.

But by the time they reached the spot the tramp had vanished, and though they ran this way and that, they could see no further sign of him. For a moment or two they hesitated, not knowing which direction they ought to take, and while they waited they heard another cry from Jack.

"There he goes. He's on the other side of the stream!" the girl cried, and rushing back the two boys were just in time to see their cousin take a flying leap across the stream and sprint up the long sloping space of open meadow-land on the other side of it.

Keith and Jim followed her example, and leaping over the narrow stream they hurried in pursuit of their dinner. But they would have had little chance of overtaking it had it not been for Jack, who was a splendid little runner, and was tearing after the escaping tramp at a pace which neither of her cousins could equal. She came up with him just as he was disappearing through a fence into another, thicker wood, in which they would probably have lost him altogether, and clutched valiantly at his coat. The man uttered an oath, and turning upon her, rained down blow after blow upon her hatless head. But Jack was game. With a pluck that would have done credit to a full-blown Englishman—so the boys agreed afterwards—she clung on tightly to the ruffian's coat and refused to budge until her cousins came tearing up. Between the three of them, they overpowered the tramp and got him full-length upon the ground, and then Keith sat on his head and Jim held down his feet, while Jack explored his pockets.

The joint of beef was there, wrapped up in a greasy newspaper, together with a sticky mess of carrots and onions. So, in another pocket, was the tin of corned beef the boys had brought that morning! So likewise, were a couple of forks, Keith's watch, the tin-opener, a compass of Jim's and one or two other trifles! Jack extracted them all from the tramp's ragged but capacious pockets, while Keith and Jim uttered indignant cries as each well-known object came to view and the tramp groaned and whined beneath the weight of them, and implored them fervently not to hand him over to the police.

They didn't in the end. They extracted a promise from him to leave the camp alone, and allowed him to depart with the half-cooked dinner, which none of them exactly fancied after its sojourn in his pocket. Then, with the rest of the rescued articles, the three of them returned to the camp to make as good a meal as they could off the tinned beef—which, being tinned, was uncontaminated by its contact with the tramp—and the cakes and the fruit which Jack so luckily had brought with her.

The little adventure had quite melted the ice; and all the dislike and apprehension with which the two boys had viewed their cousin's visit vanished away.

"What a pity it is you're not really a boy, Jack!" Jim said regretfully, at the close of a busy afternoon when, under Jack's directions, the tent had been moved to a more suitable spot and the girl had shown the boys how to scoop out the earth and pad the hollow with bracken and grass to make comfortable beds for the night, and had carried out various other small improvements which would add tremendously to their comfort. "If only you were, you could come and sleep out with us, and we'd have no end of fun together."

"We're going to have fun together. I can spend all the day-time with you as long as you don't find me in the way," Jack said. "I'll get up early to-morrow and come down and cook your breakfast for you."

And so she did, and proved a surprisingly good cook too! The help she was able to give made just all the difference to that camping-out. It proved the very jolliest holiday the two boys had ever spent, and neither of them again regretted the sudden and unexpected visit of Jacqueline from France.

Geoff's Sister

By

Phyllis Kerr

"IF something doesn't happen soon, I shall burst, so take warning!"

The voice of Betty Henderson, of the Fourth Form at Belmont School, Naresfield, rang; tragic in its tone of abandoned boredom, above the anti-prep hour hubbub in the Middle School sitting-room, and two or three of Betty's neighbours looked up from their various occupations.

"Poor old Bet!" Cicely Lane murmured sympathetically, gazing at the speaker from the languorous depths of an armchair.

"Write out that Form team you promised me at least a month ago, and stop whining!" came the matter-of-fact tones of Barbara Fawcett, Form Captain and Betty's chum. "You've done nothing but grizzle since cock-crow this morning, as though a pouring wet half-term, with tennis and cricket out of the question, wasn't enough to make one turn grey, without your adding to the misery," and Barbara's dark head bent once more over her book.

"Oh, but it *is* rather awful!" Betty went on, in an unperturbed voice. "It's been the deadest term on record, I verily believe, and if this half isn't better than the last, I shall follow Hamlet's advice and get me to a nunnery, and spend the rest of my life writing my reminiscences."

She slid off her perch on the table and crossed to the window.

"Why, great golliwogs, it's actually stopped raining!" she cried joyfully. "First time this term, isn't it? Anyhow, who says a whack at the nets before supper?"

She turned to the other occupants of the room, her eyes eager, but Barbara rose to her feet, closing her book with the cool deliberation which characterized all her actions.

"My child," she said slowly. "I beg to nip your little plan in the bud. There is nearly an hour before supper, and you are coming down to the hard courts to be put through it. Your tennis needs attention, and Valerie promised to coach us if it was fine to-night. It's a topping opportunity, with nearly everyone away for half-term, and the courts deserted, and besides——" she smiled teasingly, "I don't suppose you need much encouragement, since Valerie is to be the coach."

Betty blushed as a laugh went up at her expense, for it was a well-known fact that she suffered from a very big "pash" for the school captain.

"I—I'm not awfully keen on——" she began, hesitatingly, and the candid Barbara cut her short with a scornful:

"Rot! You know you're bubbling over with joy at the prospect of seeing her, so don't be a silly owl, Lizzie"—Barbara's irrelevant title for the luckless Elizabeth—"but trot along like a good little girl and get your racquet and shoes. I'll go and ask Valerie if she's free to give us a few tips."

Betty sped, and Barbara, an unusually serious expression in her eyes, turned to Cicely.

"I wish Betty'd take more interest in tennis," she said wistfully. "She's got topping style, and she'd be one of the best players Belmont's ever had if she wasn't so horribly slack. Since she got her Form tie she hasn't bothered herself a bit. It isn't as though we can afford for her to play the ass, either. We've hardly anyone who's the earthliest good at the game, and the school needs people like Betty if we're to beat the High School—and, Cicely, I'd love to beat them, y'know!"

"I know you would," Cicely said sympathetically. "But don't worry, old bean. I bet you anything Betty will play absolutely rippingly when the time comes. Look at her in the Form matches! *She* won the Cup for us!"

Barbara smiled wanly as she crossed to the door.

"Yes, I know. She's a real sport underneath; but, Cicely, the school's in a rotten

state. I wish—I wish we could get someone here who'd really buck us up, someone who really was "someone" in tennis! Miss Heriot is awfully good, of course, but——" she sighed, then laughed. "I saw a lot of the big people—Miss O'Donnell and Geoffrey Masters—he's *glorious*, Cicely!—and Mrs. Lennard—playing at Eastbourne, and it's made me fed-up with pat-ball. If only we could get someone like one of them to coach us! Then—why, C, the High School and St. Cyprian's wouldn't have a look in!"

She turned to the door, and suddenly the handle was wrenched from outside, the door was flung open violently, and Betty, her eyes dancing, her face flushed with excitement, burst into the room, panting:

"Babs—Cicely—Mary—all of you, what *do* you think? The most wonderful thing has happened——"

Barbara looked at her indulgently.

"The one and only kissed you in the cloakroom?" she said banteringly.

Betty let the question pass in scornful silence.

"The crowd from the six-fifty have just got in," she continued breathlessly. "I've seen Margery, who went down to shepherd the new girls—three of 'em, at half-term, too!—and—who d'you think one of them is? You'll never guess!"

"Waste of good breath trying, then," said Barbara, smiling at her friend's breathless enthusiasm. "Who is it, Betsy? Someone's baby sister, or cook's niece, or a nigger, or what?"

"Don't talk rot, Barbara!" Betty's voice was quite sharp. "It's someone—someone—who—well, it's Angela Masters! She's his—she's Geoffrey Masters' sister!"

"*What?*"

Half a dozen voices shouted the word in an incredulous falsetto. There was no doubting the speaker's sincerity this time, and, in a moment, Betty was surrounded by a horde of breathless questioners.

"Look here!" she gasped, after a few minutes, "I shall go mad if you all yell at me any more! Why don't you come along and see her for yourselves, instead of wasting time talking?"

In a minute the sitting-room was deserted.

So it was that when, a few minutes later, Miss Drew, the Head Mistress, dismissed from her presence the three half-term new girls, a bevy of Middle School girls stood in excited groups in the corridor outside the study, hanging, in palpitating suspense, on Betty Henderson's words.

At last the door of the study opened, and a tall, pig-tailed, self-possessed damsel of some sixteen summers emerged, and treated the throng in the passage to a somewhat disdainful stare.

"Is *that* her?" Cicely whispered, ruefully, and, as Betty shook a vigorous head, she added a feeling "Thank goodness!"

Another long pause, then——

"Ah!"

An expectant thrill passed through the waiting groups as the study door opened once more and a girl emerged.

Betty nodded excitedly, and upwards of a score of eyes were focused on one lone object, and, suddenly aware that she was the centre of interest, the small, frightened-looking girl stiffened nervously, and, with heightened colour, walked along the corridor, past the eager group, in the wake of the pig-tailed one.

"Is that—*his* sister?"

The voice of Mary Trent, famed for her collection of newspaper snapshots of the godlike Geoffrey Masters, was frankly disappointed, and, judging by the crestfallen look of one or two others, she was not the only one who was unpleasantly surprised.

"Why, she's not a scrap like—like Geoff!" complained another ardent Masters-worshipper. "She's dumpy and washed-out and ugly, and——"

"Shut up, Joan, and don't be such an ass!" Barbara commanded brusquely. "What on earth does it matter what she looks like, so long as she can play tennis? You wait until you see Angela on the courts! You won't bother about the colour of her hair then, I bet! I say——" her voice suddenly grew joyous, "won't it be gorgeous to have her in the school team! She'll knock that conceited left-hander at the High School into a cocked hat! Come on, Bets! Let's ask her to play with us to-morrow!"

The pair, bubbling over with eagerness, ran the new girl to earth in her dormitory.

Angela Masters looked up from her unpacking, and flushed nervously as she met Betty's frankly admiring eyes.

"I say, I suppose you're awfully keen on tennis?" Barbara began. "We're longing to see you play. We're all mad over G—your brother's play, and we're frightfully bucked to have you here. I—I suppose you wouldn't give us—Betty and me and—and Valerie Grange, the captain, you know, who's our champion, a game to-morrow evening?"

Two girls stood breathlessly awaiting

" ' It's topping of you all to give me such a splendid time,' Geoffrey Masters said " (p. 221)

Drawn by
J. Dewar Mills

the new girl's answer. Angela looked up, and there was something in her eyes that reminded the wondering onlookers of a hunted animal.

"It's awfully nice of you to ask me," Geoff's sister faltered; "but—but I'm afraid I can't. You see, I—I don't play any games."

"Don't — play — any games?" Betty gasped, whilst Barbara stood by, amazed into silence. "But you *must* play tennis! You're Geoffrey Masters' sister, and——" Betty laughed in a forced way. "Oh, you must be ragging, Angela! Of course, you play! You —"

The new girl had risen, and, her eyes wild, her face flushed, she swung round on the two amazed girls.

"I tell you I don't play!" she cried fiercely, but there was a hint of tears in her voice. "It's no good bothering me, because—because—I—I *can't* change my mind!"

The nine days' wonder at Belmont had lasted exactly an hour, and the joy at having a sister of the popular idol, Geoffrey Masters, among them gave way, in turn, to wonder, then scorn, at that sister's utter failure to live up to the school's expectations.

Angela Masters was, to put it in Betty's crude language, "an utter wash-out."

For a week or two the school fretted and fumed, then the storm blew over, and Angela was left entirely to herself, to eat her heart out in utter solitude.

It was Angela herself, a pale and unhappy Angela, who altered the state of affairs by a casual announcement made one morning at breakfast.

It was two days before the event of Naresfield's year—the Musical Festival, in which Belmont's star performers always took part.

Angela, whose intellectual—she occupied an inglorious position in the Upper Third—and athletic shortcomings were to a certain extent redeemed by her exceptional talent in music, was among the most promising candidates, and it was this fact which was, in the first instance, responsible for the alteration of the whole of her school career.

"Are any of your people coming down for the Festival, Angela?" Nancy Kensington, the school's "hope" for the violin prize, asked. In a sudden lull in the conversation Angela's answer was heard by almost every one of the twenty girls at the big table.

"Yes," she said slowly. "Mother and father won't be able to come as they're going to Scotland to-morrow, but Brian, my eldest brother, and Geoffrey, are sure to come."

"What, Geoffrey—I mean Mr. Masters—is coming here?" Betty Henderson asked excitedly, and several girls waited to hear Angela's answer.

Angela flushed nervously.

"He's playing in the Mallingham tournament on Monday and, as Mallingham's so near, he thought he'd spend the week-end here, and come to the Festival."

The news created a mild sensation, and the Festival, a none too popular event with the non-musical members of the school, suddenly became the object of wild enthusiasm and eager anticipation.

"What a snub for the High School and St. Cyprian's!" Mary Trent cried that night in her dormitory to her fellow-idolizers of Geoffrey Masters. "They'll be green with envy when they hear! I expect that it'll be in the *Naresfield Gazette*—'That brilliant and popular young hero of a thousand tennis-court fights was——' oh, bless him!" and Mary swooped down on a photo of "the brilliant and popular young hero," which, cut out from the *Daily Picture* and framed in all the glories of a grey passe-partout, adorned Mary's dressing-table.

"If you kiss it with such force you'll leave a beastly smudge on the glass," Barbara grunted. "Besides, it's a rotten photo, Mary. He looks like a prize-fighter, or Tarzan, or some other atrocity. Why don't you borrow that ripping one Angela's got in her cubie? That's worth having!"

Mary sniffed, and tenderly replaced the offending snapshot.

"Anyhow, we'll be seeing the real Geoff on Saturday," she cried gleefully, "and I'm jolly well going to ask him to let me take his photo!"

"If it's anything like your usual attempts with that ancient camera of yours, there'll be a world-wide demand for copies!" said Barbara drily, and she dived into bed to avoid Mary's well-aimed pillow.

Two days later Angela Masters carried off the Pianoforte Solo Cup and the Original Compositions Medal with fabulous ease, leaving her rivals from the High School and St. Cyprian's far behind, and earning, into the bargain, a special word of praise from the chairman, the world-famous pianist Strelinski.

Yet, whole-hearted though the Belmont cheering was, Belmont's eyes were not for the small, radiant girl who shook hands with the great musician, but for the dark-haired, bronzed young giant who rose as Angela returned to her seat, and who, some time later, drove back with her to Belmont.

Geoffrey Masters in the flesh—and, at the "by request" exhibition game which, after tea, he gave against the games mistress, Miss Heriot, Belmont adored to its heart's content. Who could resist six-feet-one of twenty-two-year-old British manhood when it possessed the name and reputation of Geoffrey Masters, and who, moreover, had a pair of exceedingly blue eyes which never ceased to laugh? Miss Drew sighed indulgently as she glanced from her guest to the throngs of admiring girls who surged around him, seeking out the hitherto-neglected Angela and begging for an introduction.

"It's topping of you all to give me such a splendid time," Geoffrey Masters said, laughingly responding to the insistent cries of "Speech!" "and I'm afraid I shall get horribly conceited if you all persist in spoiling me so. As to all the nice things you've said about my tennis, well, I can only say, 'thank you,' and point out that I don't deserve one quarter of the compliments you've showered upon me.

"Tennis is a glorious game, and I am awfully glad to see how keen you all are on it. I feel sure that there are several budding O'Donnells among you, and, if you'll forgive the personal note, I would like to introduce you to—in my opinion, at least—our future champion, someone who would have given our friends at Wimbledon one or two 'wrinkles' if she had not strained her silly little heart. I am referring to my small sister, Angela!" and the hero of the hour turned and, smiling, pulled Angela's short hair.

Belmont gasped, then, suddenly, Geoffrey Masters' smile turned to consternation, as with a passionate cry of "Oh, Geoff, you beast to tell them!" Angela broke away from him and, with tears of rage in her eyes, dashed across the lawns and into the house.

That evening a mystified Barbara Fawcett, emissary of her fellow-Fourth Formers, sought out Miss Drew and begged for an explanation of Angela's extraordinary behaviour.

"I myself only found out the truth this evening, Barbara," the Head Mistress said, "when Mr. Masters, having aroused my curiosity, told me that some years ago Angela seriously strained her heart in saving the life of a small cousin who was in danger of drowning.

"The damage would be remedied in time, but the specialist forbade Angela to have any strenuous exercise for at least four years.

"Angela is super-sensitive about her weakness, and she begged her mother to say nothing about it when she came to us this term. She would not explain to you why she did not play games, in which she was once as expert as her distinguished brother, but she guarded her secret zealously. It would never have been discovered until Angela's stipulated four years were over, as they will be next year, had not her brother let the cat out of the bag this afternoon!

"I am afraid Angela has had a rather hard time here among all you games-lovers, but"—the Head Mistress smiled confidently—"I know you will set things right, Barbara."

And Barbara did, and when, later, she returned from dinner at her brother's hotel in Naresfield, "Geoff's sister" received a right royal welcome which even put into the shade that given to her brother earlier in the day. And this time it was not reflected glory!

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The Weekly Boarder

by

Ethel Talbot

WE had never had a weekly boarder at school before Winnie came. All of us were boarders, and, though we didn't guess it, all of us were *snobs!* "Conservative" was the word we used, though; we rather prided ourselves in our dormitory on the fact that we didn't care for the idea of Winnie coming to St. Bride's.

"Why, our mysteries and secrets will be all over the town," said Brenda to me on the first night of term (Winnie, being a weekly boarder, wasn't to turn up until roll-call next morning), "if she goes home to her aunt's every Friday night."

"Her aunt's deaf," said Brenda, "if that's any comfort. I know Winnie perfectly well by sight, in church, on Sundays. She sits right up under the pulpit with her aunt, and the aunt has a trumpet. So, as far as the mysteries are concerned, perhaps they're safe."

"They're *less* safe," said I. "She'll have to shout them so loud before the trumpet-aunt hears them, that the whole town of Redscale will hear them, too."

"Hum!" said Brenda thoughtfully.

For the fact of the matter was that we *had* a mystery. A mystery, too, which we didn't want the town to know. Last term we'd had two losses, pretty bad ones; the second loss was the result of the first, and they were both utterly different ones, and both utterly horrible. And we didn't want one word about either of them to be heard outside the school walls.

To begin with, we'd lost all the silver sports cups. Every one of them. And to go on with, we'd lost Jim, our all-round school-man, who was as necessary to St. Bride's as any one of us. He'd come under suspicion on account of the loss of the cups, and he'd—gone.

Miss Hurst would never have sacked him; for, to begin with, I am sure she never suspected him in the least until his letter was found. But the very day after the cups had been missed, Jim was missed, too. He left a scrawled sort of letter in Miss Hurst's room, saying that he was sorry, and begging to be forgiven. That was all.

Well. Some schools would, I suppose, have rung up the police-station, and have had poor old Jim found and taken away. Not Miss Hurst, though, and not us. We're different. And so, for the matter of that, was Jim different from any other school all-round man. He'd served in the war, you see; and been shell-shocked. Miss Hurst spoke to us all quite plainly, and said that she believed he'd lost his memory for a bit, or something of that kind, and just acted on impulse. "My idea is," said Miss Hurst, "that he will bring them back. And until then, I suggest to you all that we do without our cups, and play up for our matches just as sturdily as ever—without them. It *might* be made a police matter, of course, but——"

Miss Hurst stopped.

"Do you agree?" she said, looking down from the platform at us all.

Every single one of us did.

So the town heard nothing about the lost cups. Even the outside visiting teachers weren't told. "If we'd had day girls, it would have been bound to be known," as Brenda remarked to me on the first night. "And now, with a weekly boarder, I expect the whole place will be ringing with it. Who ever heard of a school without cups? The first thing she'll ask to see will be those, probably. Most girls do."

But Winnie didn't. For one thing she seemed dreadfully shy. For another thing she hadn't been to school before, so perhaps she didn't know about such things, thought we. For a third reason not one of us mentioned the subject of cups to her, and so the matter didn't come up.

Not in the dormitory, I mean. As a matter of fact, Brenda and May and I rather cold-shouldered Winnie, I fancy. We let her into none of our dormitory secrets, and without meaning in the very least to make her feel outsidery, I rather think we did make her feel as much of an

outsider as any weekly boarder ever did feel.

It was for that reason, I suppose, that she took up with the juniors.

There are about half a dozen of them, and they all seemed to go fairly crazy over her. We soon heard, from them, far more about her than we'd known before. "She's got a pony and she rides over the Moor all Saturdays," hissed they.

"She'd been far better, then," said we, "to stick at school and help us to win matches. We thought she took care of an aunt."

"Without looking in our direction she backed straight into the camp with the woman beside her"

Drawn by Treyer Evans

"So she does, but the aunt's too deaf to talk to much, and so she makes friends with the queerest people," clamoured the juniors. "She knows the gipsies who camp on the Moor, and she's told us their names. And she knows . . ."

"I tell you one thing she's not to know, then," said we, turning upon them suddenly. "She's not to know about Jim and the cups. Do you hear?"

"As though we'd tell that! Why, Miss Hurst herself said it was a secret," said the juniors, turning on us.

Well, that looked, didn't it, as though Winnie didn't know.

But she did.

It came out quite suddenly—the fact of her knowing, I mean! "Is *that* where one of the cups used to stand?" she asked suddenly, pointing up to the little ledges which had stood empty in the hall ever since that day. Then—two of us saw her—she turned perfectly crimson, and began to change the subject.

Not so us, however. "Who told you about our cups?" asked Brenda swiftly.

"Most schools have them, don't they?" said Winnie, trying to fence.

"But we've *not*. You evidently know that, too," said Brenda. "To call a spade a spade and no nonsense about it, have you heard the story of their loss?"

"Yes," said Winnie.

"Did the juniors tell you? Or anyone in school?" we asked.

"No. And I won't tell you another word," said Winnie, suddenly turning like the worm.

It was after that that we began to mistrust her. Oh, yes, I know it sounds caddish, but mistrust her we did. We began to talk over things at the week-end, and to compare notes.

How *did* she know, we asked ourselves? Then we began to ask ourselves why she'd come to school. From that we sort of linked on the cups to her coming, and the tales that the juniors told us seemed to cast fuel on the fire. Believe it or not as you like, before half-term we'd begun to think that Winnie was somehow connected with the loss. And on the Saturday afternoon when Miss Blake took us over the Moor for an extra long walk, something happened which made us doubly sure.

We reached the gipsy camp, you see; and, just as we were passing it, as we always do, two of the juniors came racing up from behind.

"Winnie's in the camp!" they said.

"Rot," said we.

But she was. As we came back over the Moor, there came Winnie from one of the tents. She was talking very eagerly to one of the gipsy women, and she didn't see us at first. When she did see us you should have watched her jump. Right into

the air, and then, without looking in our direction, she backed straight into the camp with the woman beside her. And that was all we saw of Winnie that day.

But that much we *had* seen—every one of us; even Miss Blake. "I wonder what Winnie was doing there?" said Miss Blake in a surprised voice. Back over the Moor we walked.

There was only one topic talked of in that backward walk by Brenda and me—and that was Winnie! There was something queer about that girl. Something most extraordinarily queer. When we told May, who hadn't taken the Moor walk that afternoon, May stared, too.

"You don't think she took the cup, do you?" said May. "Or helped the gipsies to, or something? Why, gipsies *do* take things. Certainly those particular ones have been camping on the Moor since I've been at school. Yet you never know. Winnie has told the juniors that she spends a lot of her time on the hills and knows all the people in the cottages."

May stopped. Then she began to speak again, and then she stopped again. "Well," said she at last, "perhaps I ought to tell you. You remember that day when she asked about the cups in the hall?"

"Yes," we said.

"Well, she was standing below where the platform is just after that, and I went up to speak to her. As a matter of fact, I thought we'd been a bit too snubby to her, you know, and I noticed that she was looking queer, which I thought was in consequence of our words. Well, it may have been; but all I can tell is that she started shaking and shivering when I mentioned the cups, until I asked her if she was ill.

"'I don't think so,' she said. Then she changed the subject and walked away looking awfully red and conscious. But in two minutes, as soon as she was out of the room, I saw her talking quite ordinarily to one of the juniors about some home-work she was helping with."

"Do you mean that she was faking illness just to put you off the subject?" we asked, staring. "It sounds jolly extraordinary."

"So it did to me. She might easily just have walked away. As a matter of fact, she *was* just crossing the room when the shaky fit seemed to come on. She does come from India, and I believe they have ague there," said May; "and I don't want to put suspicion on her, but, after what you've said——"

"They have unscrupulous native ayahs, too, in India, as well as ague," put in Brenda, "so I've heard, who teach children deceitful tricks. Well, but I can't *see*——"

Neither could the others of us. We were half inclined to think we'd made a Mount Everest out of a mole-hill, and we put the subject behind us and tried to forget it. On Monday when Winnie came back, however, she looked so terribly rum that we couldn't help beginning to remember all over again.

"We saw you on Saturday," we told her. For we're rather keen at St. Bride's on calling spades spades.

"I saw you, too," said Winnie, getting very red. "I often go to the camp. There's a dear old man there who mends chairs, and he's taught me a lot of things. He——"

She was taking something out of her suitcase as she spoke. Something evidently that she didn't want us to see. For she turned her back on us, and hid it under a Sunday skirt. We left her alone to her mystery; we don't pry in at Bride's, where we're not asked; but we thought the more, though—the week having begun and Winnie having returned with its beginning—we couldn't talk so freely in our dormitory as we might have done if it had been the week-end.

Perhaps that made us lie awake more. Generally the whole dormitory turns over and begins to snore in chorus as soon as Sister puts out the light; but on that night I, for one, couldn't sleep a wink.

I lay awake wondering for quite a long time, and I don't think I'd snoozed for more than ten minutes all told, when a sudden bump on my pillow made me spring into the air.

"Who's that?" I yapped.

"Ssssh!" said Brenda.

But it wasn't Brenda alone; May was beside her. Like two Spanish inquisitors in their kimonos they had come creeping out of their cubies.

"Did you see her go?" they hissed.

"Her?" I said.

"Winnie," said they. "We've both been lying awake. And she scooted through the dormitory door with something under her dressing-gown, hidden. It was the queer shape of the thing she took out of her suitcase this morning!"

"What?" I said.

"What is it, eh? Yes, that's what we want to know, too. For all we know it may be a 'jemmy,' whatever they are, that

thieves use. If she's been helping with the theft of the cups, she may be thinking of helping with some other theft, who knows? And there are other things——"

Well, within the next few moments we, three of us, were all on our way downstairs, too.

It was quite dark, but most of us have got electric torches, and we took two of them along. We slithered down the stairs and along the corridor in the direction of the hall, and before we reached there we knew that we'd taken the right way. For there was a little gleam of light coming through the open door.

We tiptoed along and peered in.

"She must be daft," panted May as we leaned over each other's shoulders.

"It's some Black Magic incantation or other," whispered Brenda, half turning. As a matter of fact the proceeding *did* look so black-magicky that it was a wonder we didn't all turn and flee. The thought of the cups kept us brave, however, and we continued to stare.

Up and down in front of the platform Winnie was pacing. She had put down her candle in the middle of the platform itself, and in her hands she was carrying what looked like the branch of a forked tree.

"Which was it?" she was muttering, as she paced slowly along. And then . . . suddenly she came to a standstill; dropped her tree branch, and began to shiver and shake and shudder.

"That's what I saw her do before," said May. "And she's standing just where she was standing, then—— *Oh!*"

We all raced in.

We nearly raced backwards out again with amazement, however, when Winnie marched to meet us with a face wreathed with smiles of triumph. "Got a screwdriver?" said Winnie.

But she was no lunatic. Though, truly, we had thought so. Nor was she a criminal, nor was she one endued with Black Magic. As we gaped at her, she explained.

Not until we'd produced a screwdriver, however; and it had done its work. There was one in the piano-tuner's box inside the hall cupboard; and we fetched it, thinking that perhaps we'd better humour her. And we watched her as she knelt down.

"I believe," said Winnie, "though you've rather spoilt the climax by bursting in, that in a second I shall find your cups."

She did. As the board upon which she had stood and shivered was lifted, inch by inch, we saw that the cups were hidden below.

Every one of them intact.

"The first thing to tell you is," said Winnie, lifting out the last one, "that last term I was told in confidence about your loss. It was Jim who told me, your odd-man; I've known him since he joined the gipsies." Then, as we gasped, she went on.

"He got a most horrible scare, poor

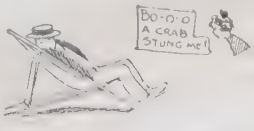
"We were all in a ring on the platform, listening"

Drawn by Treyer Evans

thing," said Winnie. "He thought it was his fault that the cups were lost. He ran away because of that, but he did not take them himself. He discovered first, you see, that they were gone; and he took the blame on himself, because he'd given shelter for the night down in his cottage in the school grounds, to a travelling pedlar. He told the gipsies that he walked for a mile or two on the road with the pedlar on his way when he left, and he certainly hadn't got any of the cups about him then; yet—the man was about the premises the night before, Jim thinks, because he found the hall windows open next day."

"But why didn't he tell all this to Miss Hurst?" asked we.

"He'd never have told anyone, I think," said Winnie, "but for the fact that the gipsies found him, sleeping out. And ill



though he was, he was all on the hunt for the pedlar; with the idea in his head to bring back the cups to school. The gipsies took him into their camp and looked after him, and kept his secret. I kept it, too," said Winnie slowly, "until I found these."

"You—did," we said slowly.

We were all in a ring on the platform with the cups between us, listening. "But even now we don't understand how you found them."

"I'd never have done it but for one thing; and that isn't any credit to me," said Winnie. "You see, I came here with a secret, and my secret was that I knew, in a way, more about the cups than you did, from having heard the gipsies' story some months back. I've got to know the camp on the Moor, you see," went on Winnie, "because, although I am not allowed to play games, yet the doctor lets me ride, and my pony was bought by my father before he went back to India, from one of the gipsy men. That made them all friendly with me; but it wasn't until the old gipsy father found out that I'd got the water-divining touch that they really took me into their confidence."

"The—how much?" we said.

"It's—just a gift. I can find water-springs," said Winnie. "I've a wand, here, that they cut for me." She held up the tree-branch and showed it. "When I am standing over water-springs, then I can feel a tingling in my fingers, and if I am holding this branch of hazel, it rises in my hand. Lots of gipsies have the gift, and while the old camp-gipsy was showing me his, he discovered that I had it, too. Well, but listen," went on Winnie, "I'm coming to the queerest part, I think."

We were all listening already. It seemed so very queer.

"On that night when you asked me in this hall," said Winnie, "whether I knew about the loss, it happened—just as May was standing talking to me—that I began to have the tingling feeling more strongly than I'd ever had it before. It made me all shaky and quaky, and quivery and queer; and what was extra strange about it was that I knew I could not very well be standing over a water-spring because there is a whole story below this, where the drill-rooms and the kitchens are. I couldn't understand it at all; and last Saturday I went up to the camp and told the old gipsy-man about it. He said——" Winnie stopped.

"Go on," said we. Now we understood May's part of the story.

"He said," said Winnie; "that some people who have the water-finding gift very strongly have another gift as well. They can locate minerals, specially gold and silver, in the same way. 'Was you standing over anything that might be such-like?' he said. And I said 'Oh, *no!*' And it wasn't until I got home to my aunt's house that I suddenly guessed. 'Suppose, oh, suppose,' I thought, 'there *is* anything there.' And then I remembered how poor Jim, who is still ill and up with the gipsies, had said that he guessed that the pedlar must have hidden the cups somewhere where he could find them again easily. 'It's a chance,' I thought, and I came back to school this morning with my wand. Well——"

Winnie stopped. "You know the rest," said Winnie very shyly.

Well, the end of the whole thing was, of course, that we've got the cups back on their ledges, and we've got Jim back at school, and though the pedlar's never been found, we've got a pretty shrewd idea that he was to blame. And as for Winnie, she got a pretty humble apology from us three. We'll take a few more weekly boarders at St. Bride's, and be glad to welcome them, if they're anywhere near as sporting as Winnie turned out to be.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Treasure Island : The Black Arrow : Kidnapped Catriona

Empire Library **6/-** *Popular Library* **2/-**
Pocket Library **3/6** *School Edition* **2/6**

Cassell's

"OH, DEAR, IT'S SO COLD!"

(Drawn by Mabel Lucie Attwell)

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

(Drawn by Frank Adams)

Little Folks Nature Club

Photo: Mrs. M. H. Crawford

Conducted by "Squirrel"

THERE are lots of interesting things to be done at the seaside besides building sand castles, collecting shells, or searching the rock pools for hermit crabs and other creatures, and one of them is learning how to know the sea birds.

As many of these birds are white, they may seem at first to be too much alike to be troubled about, but once you begin to notice them their little differences soon become apparent, and in time your eye will become so used to detecting these that you will be able to recognize the various species quickly, and some of them even at a distance.

Finding Out for Yourself

I say "some" because the colouring of the bill and the feet are very important guides, and unless you can see these you may find it difficult to say whether a bird belongs to one species or another. But it is just such difficulties that make nature watching such a fascinating hobby. If it were all as easy as it looks when we read about it in books, it would not be half so much fun, and we should miss most of the joy and satisfaction of finding out. So, though I am going to tell you how to identify the sea birds, all I can do is to give you some useful guides, and you must then train your eyes by constant practice to pick these out on every bird you see. What is more, you must be very strict with yourself, and never say that you have seen a certain species unless you have made quite sure of it.

What to Look For

One of the best places in which to observe the gulls is a harbour, for there you often get quite close views of them. There they may alight on a buoy or a post, or swim close to the quay, or fly round some fishing-boat waiting for scraps to be thrown into the water, and when that happens they all make a dash for the spot and scramble for the tit-bits.

Now, whenever you see a gull standing anywhere, you should always look first at its legs and have a note of their colour. For if you don't do this at once, the bird may fly away while you are examining its head and body, and then you will not be able to see its legs at all, though you may study its plumage so long as it is within sight. You will understand the importance of this hint when you are trying to decide whether a bird is a common or a herring gull.

The plumage of both these birds can be

Head of the Grey Lag Goose

Photo: Mrs. M. H. Crawford

described in the same words. The head and neck and all the under parts are white, the back and wings are light grey, the tips of the wings black spotted with white, and the tail white. The common gull is eighteen inches long and the herring gull twenty-four, a difference of six inches, which you might think was quite enough to make identification easy. And so it would be if the two birds were close together so that you could compare their sizes. But when there is only one bird, or when two or more are widely separated, it is often impossible to judge by inches. Both birds also have yellow bills; there is an orange spot on the lower half of the herring gull's bill, but that of course cannot be seen except at very close quarters. The legs of the common gull, however, are greenish yellow, while those of the herring gull are flesh-coloured.

The Two Black-backed Gulls

The lesser black-backed gull is just about the same size as the herring gull, but can never be mistaken for it because its back and wings are black, and its legs are yellow. The greater black-backed gull, however, is very similar to the lesser, and though it is seven inches longer its size is only a trustworthy guide when the two birds are close enough to be compared. But again the colour of the legs is distinctive. The greater black-backed gull has flesh-coloured legs, and the lesser, as I have already said, has yellow legs.

The Black-headed Gull

The black-headed gull and the kittiwake are just about the same size as the common gull, but the former has red and the latter blackish legs. The kittiwake also has no white spots on the black tips of its wings.

At all times it is easy to identify the black-headed gull if you can see its head clearly, though this is not always black. Indeed it is never black, but in spring and summer it is chocolate, and thus at a distance looks black. It is important to note that this colouring forms a kind of hood covering the chin and throat as well as the head.

In August this hood begins to disappear, so you may see some black-headed gulls with chocolate heads, some with heads spotted brown and white, and some with heads that are all white but for two small brown spots on each side, one before and the other behind the eye. This last is the marking by which you will recognize the species throughout the winter.

But there are other white sea birds with black heads and red legs which on that account may be confused with the black-headed gull. This time, however, the heads are really black, and the colour is only on the top and back, and not on the cheeks or neck. These birds are the terns or sea swallows. They are not true swallows, but are so called because their long-pointed wings and forked tails give them a swallow-like form. It is by this form that you may know them most readily.

There are several species of tern, but those you are most likely to see are the common tern and the lesser tern. You will recognize the latter by the fact that it has a white spot on its forehead.

Distinguishing the Young

But there are still other birds that will add to your difficulties. These are not separate species, but young of those species already mentioned. For example, the young black-headed gull is like its parents in their winter dress except that it has brown on its wings, a black bar across the tip of its tail, and yellowish red legs. Its bill also is dusky instead of red. The young herring gull and lesser black-backed

gull are mottled brown and white, and are so much alike that it is impossible to say to which species they belong.

Another way by which you may know the terns is their method of feeding. They fly along about fifteen or twenty feet above the water, hover for a little, then plunge right into the sea, capture a small fish, and fly up again. The gulls, on the other hand, drop to the surface and pick up titbits that may be floating there, but do not dive.

A Wonderful Diver

A far more wonderful diver than the terns is the gannet or solan goose. This is a large white bird with conspicuous black tips to its wings. It floats along at a great height, then suddenly closes its wings, and falls like a bolt into the sea with a great splash, captures and swallows a herring or a mackerel, and then flies up to resume its watch.

The gannet is neither a gull nor a tern, and it is not even a goose, though it is called solan goose, and goose is what gannet means. Its nearest relatives are the cormorant and the shag, which are as different as possible from it in appearance. They are large black birds with long thin necks and hooked beaks. The cormorant is the larger of the two, and has a bare white patch on its throat and in spring on each thigh. They dive, but merely from the surface instead of from the air.

They swim so low in the water that it is often difficult to see them because only the neck and head are visible. As they pursue their prey under water they do not come up where they dive, but often at a considerable distance from that spot. When they capture a fish they bring it to the surface and swallow it there, and sometimes the victim is so large that they can hardly gulp it down.

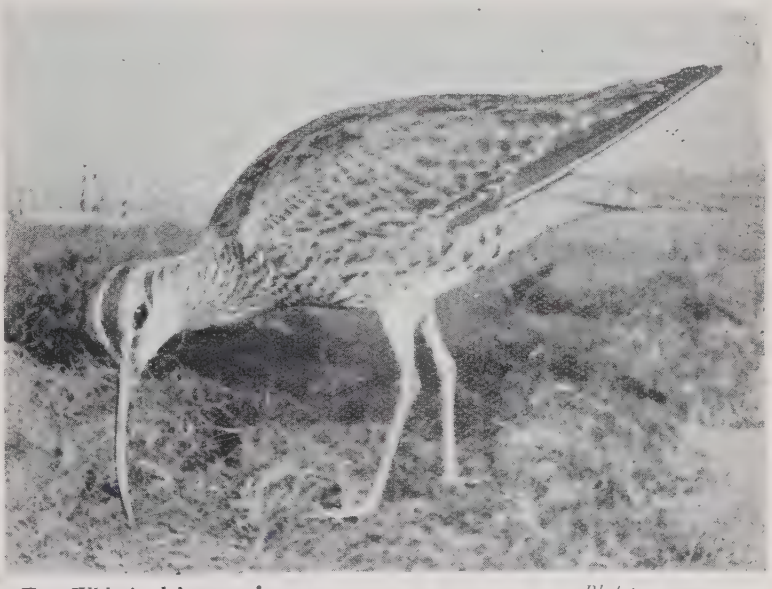
"Hanging Out to Dry"

When they are satisfied they fly to some rock to rest, and there they hang themselves out to dry, with their wings outstretched like clothes on a line, and their mouths wide open as if they had eaten far too much.

The Guillemot and the Razorbill

Two other birds belonging to quite a different family may easily be mistaken for the cormorant by beginners—namely, the guillemot and the razorbill, which are also chiefly swimmers and divers. They are only about half the size of the cormorant, however, and though they are dark above (the razorbill is black and the guillemot dark brown, which looks black at a distance), they are both white underneath. Besides, the cormorant will come right into a harbour to feed, and will fish in quite shallow water, but you will only see the other two in deep water, except in the nesting season, when they sit up on rocks like little penguins.

The guillemot has a long, sharply-pointed bill. The razorbill, as its name implies, has a beak that is so narrow that it looks as if its edge might be used for cutting. This beak is also short and deep, and rounded at the tip. It also has one or more white lines running across it from



The Whimbrel is seen in England during autumn migration

Photo: Mrs. M. H. Crawford

top to bottom, and there is another straight white line which passes back from its top to the eye. The razorbill also has a distinct white bar on each wing.

The puffin is a smaller member of this family, but is easily recognized by his large, bright orange, parrot-like beak.

On the shore itself you will see many birds of another kind called waders. They are related to the terns and seagulls, but do not have webbed feet, so, instead of swimming, content themselves with paddling about in the pools and at the edge of the sea.

Commonest of the Waders

The commonest of the waders are the dunlin and the ringed plover. At this season the dunlin gather in large flocks, and frequently you may see a number of ringed plover in these flocks. You may know the ringed plover by the fact that it has a broad white collar with a broad black collar under it, also a black bandeau across the head from eye to eye, with a bold white patch right in the middle of the forehead. It has a short bill, whereas the dunlin has a long, straight black bill. In summer the dunlin has a large black patch on the lower part of the breast, and if you see a flock early in August you will probably notice that some of the birds are still wearing this decoration.

Another common wader is the redshank. It is similar in build to the dunlin, but is somewhat larger and has long red legs. It has a very beautiful but plaintive note.

The sea pie or oyster catcher is still larger, and is known at once by his bold black and white plumage. His long bill and legs are bright red.

Curlew or Whimbrel?

The curlew is a large brownish bird, with a long curved bill. It is quite common, and may be seen in considerable numbers where the shores are marshy. If, however, you see a large flock of birds of this description in August or September, the probability is that they will be whimbrel. This bird is a small edition of the curlew, but again size is deceptive except when the two birds are close together. The whimbrel may be distinguished, however, by the fact that it has a bold buff stripe over the eye.

When you see such a flock you may know that it has come all the way from the Faroe Islands, or from Iceland, and is only passing through this country on its autumn migration to a warmer climate farther south.

A Grammatical Grievance

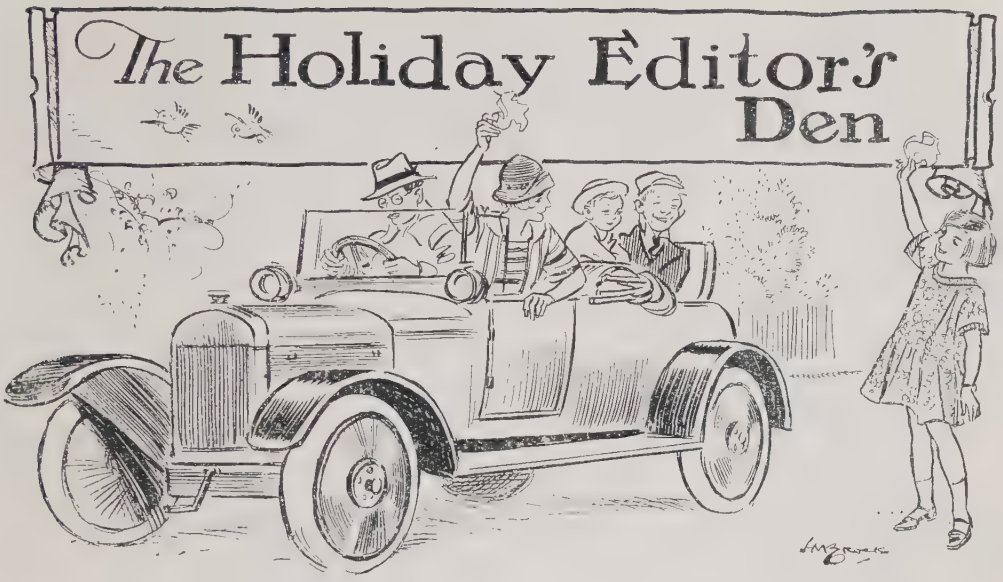
By Ada L. Harris

"I don't want to make a fuss,"
Said the Hippopotamus,
"But I'd really like to know the reason why
When there's only one of us,
'Tis Hippopotam*us*,
And when there's two 'tis Hippopotam*i*?

"I've tried and tried," he said,
"With a towel round my head,
To prove beyond a doubt, in black and white,
Till my head ached through and through,
That one is *more* than two;
But never seemed to get the answer right.

"I've a cousin and an aunt;
But, all the same, I can't
Say *us*, it seems, when speaking of us three,
But must, I don't know why,
Say Hippopotam*i*—
I wonder why not Hippopotame?

"I wish I had been born
A simple unicorn,"
He added in exasperated tones;
"Or, instead of all this fuss,
With a name that ends in 'us,'
Have been Hippo-griff, or Smith, or Hippo-Jones."



THE HOLIDAYS

A Nice Long Tour!

YES, my readers, you are all bubbling over with excitement at the prospect of the holidays. You are going to the seaside, or the country, or to Wembley, and you are counting the days to the start. Or, indeed, you have already started, and are reading this on the seashore whilst waiting for a bathe in the briny. And your poor Editor——

Things were not intended to be like this. I was going to have an early holiday—just a nice long motor tour with Mrs. Editor. Carrots, Peter, the Publisher, Covers Man—all were to be left behind whilst we whirled along the road on our trusty little car. True, we had not made up our minds where we were going—I thought of Broadstairs and a trip to Cromer; Mrs. Editor said she would agree to this if it could include Newquay in Cornwall, the Wye Valley, and (if possible, though she did not insist upon it) Stratford-on-Avon. She would also like to have seen something of Scotland and the Channel Islands, though she realized that there might be some difficulty in getting this into a fortnight.

I tore my hair at that. However, I bought seventeen new guide-books and fourteen new maps, and, after working overtime on them for eight nights and a Saturday afternoon, I suggested that we should make for Windsor, then Malvern and Worcester, finally putting in a week at Aberystwyth, and returning via Shrewsbury.

Trouble at Home

Mrs. Editor said she didn't mind where we went if only I would put away those wretched guide-books. What with me staying up late at nights and ruining my eyes over maps, and the Youngest Reader waking at five and clamouring for the car, she was getting quite worn out. So we agreed to my suggestion, and I took the car to have the springs greased.

When I reached home again, Mrs. Editor informed me that Peter's nurse had given a week's notice. She had been with us for eight months, and as this was her thirteenth place she thought it would be unlucky if she stayed any longer, so had decided to have a change.

This, of course, was rather awkward, as we had intended leaving Peter at home. However, we wired to the good kind lady who had him for the holidays last year, and hoped for the best.

Next night Miranda, our faithful charlady, told us that she had found another place. She had heard, she said, that we were making changes, and that we would

not require *her* services. Also we had a wire from the good kind lady, saying that she and her husband and daughter were all ill in bed, and so could not take Peter this time.

I again tore my hair, and urged Mrs. Editor to visit all the registry offices in the neighbourhood and try and get some help. Meanwhile I put the holidays off a week.

In Search of a Maid

I need not tell you all the adventures Mrs. Editor had in trying to find a maid. The registry office gave her the addresses of seven; one lived at Enfield, and another at Horsham; a third hailed from Kensington, and the fourth from Epsom. Mrs. Editor started out to track them down. The girl at Enfield had that morning been engaged by someone else; the good lady at Epsom was a war widow with thirteen children, and would willingly come at a quite cheap wage if we did not mind having her children too; they were all as good as gold, and would not be the least trouble. Mrs. Editor was afraid we had no room for these, and hurried off to Horsham. Here, again, she had no luck.

This made me a little bit afraid we might have to put the holiday off yet further. Certainly the end of the week came, and still we did not know what we should do with Peter.

Not that I had much time to worry about things. On Thursday the gardener sent word that he was so busy elsewhere that he could not spare time to come to us. As it had been raining hard off and on for weeks the grass had been steadily growing, and I found I should have to cut the lawn very quickly if I was to keep pace with its growth. So I got out the mower and started. It was hard work—especially as Peter insisted on running up and down with us, and the cat kept getting in the way.

Carrots to the Rescue

At the week-end, however, our luck began to turn. Carrots, our printer's office boy, had heard of my plight, and kindly offered to come over on Saturday afternoon and lend a hand. Also the neighbours in the big house on the top of the hill invited us there to tea on the Sunday. We told them we should be without assistance, and could not leave Peter. "Oh, never mind; bring him along, by all means," they replied.

Saturday came—and Carrots. Luckily Mrs. Editor had done some cooking. Mind, I don't grudge anybody a good meal—but the way Carrots got through the food alarmed me: three helpings of suet pudding, even though assisted down by oceans of syrup and ginger-beer, seems to me to be not quite the sort of thing for a hot summer's day, even for a printer's boy. Anyhow, Carrots survived it—though he "felt too tired" to start on the garden straight away, and said he would "amuse" Peter.

This he did till tea-time, when it needed four cups of tea with suitable accompaniments of cake and jam to fortify him for the work of cutting the grass. Still, Carrots means well, and although the lawn looks rather queer now, I suppose I must agree that half a cut lawn is better than one not cut at all. Perhaps I shall be able to cut the other half in the holidays.

Peter Goes Out to Tea

On Sunday Peter was good as gold. He played in the garden in the morning until eleven, when he dutifully had his morning's nap. After a thoroughly good dinner, Mrs. Editor washed him well, put on his best blue suit, and went off to get ready, leaving me with the youth and instructions not on any account to allow him to get himself dirty.

Unfortunately, owing to a misunderstanding, he fell over the garden roller, and had to be washed and dressed again.

About four, nevertheless, we set out. Peter walked very sedately the first few steps—then decided to go and see the chickens. This involved a fall into the mud, a liberal wiping by my best handkerchief, and a resumption of the walk.

How we got up the hill is more than I can say. I carried the young imp the last part of the way, and duly deposited him down on the doorstep.

The people were all delighted to see Peter—and he, too, seemed quite pleased to see them. He had brought with him his clock-work "motor-car," and insisted on showing everybody how it worked. He also showed an extraordinary amount of curiosity about everything, running all over the house without any compunction.

Misunderstanding about Cake

Presently we were taken into the drawing-room, where the tea was laid all ready. The cakes were piled up on a cake-stand,

prominent among them being a very fine chocolate sandwich sponge cake—the kind Mrs. Editor is so fond of. The hostess said tea would be ready in a minute or two, and would Mrs. Editor be interested in seeing some new fancy work? The host took me along to choose some pieces for the piano player. Peter was unusually good, and for forty-five and a half seconds we forgot about him. . . .

"What has Peter got hold of now?" I inquired the next minute. He had dropped his toy motor on the floor, and was walking around with what appeared to be a coconut in his hand.

"The little dear!" murmured the hostess politely.

"What's the little wretch eating *now?*" I inquired. "Come along, Peter!"

Peter eyed me warily, and gave a big bite to something he held in his hand. My suspicions were aroused. I chased him round a chair, and then—oh, horror of horrors!—I found he had calmly annexed the whole of the big chocolate cake, and was endeavouring to force it into his mouth as fast as possible.

"Peter!" I exclaimed in anguish, dashing after him.

A Catastrophe

Peter thought this a bit of fun, so, still grabbing hold of the cake, he made a dash for the garden. Unfortunately he collided with the maid bringing in the hot tea; the tea-tray went over with a crash, the Youngest Reader went over likewise—and the cake ran off down the steps into the garden, where it was pursued by the family dog and two cats from the neighbourhood.

Of course, our kind host and hostess tried to make light of the matter—and the dog succeeded in catching the cake and bringing it, like a ball, to the feet of its master. The tea-pot and the cups—— But there—why tell you all this? We departed soon after, feeling very wretched. "Ta-ta, ta-ta!" remarked Peter gaily.

"That was very naughty of Peter!" remarked Mrs. Editor sadly, as we made our way home. "He has never done such a thing before.

"Can it be Carrots?" Mrs. Editor inquired, as a sudden thought came to her.

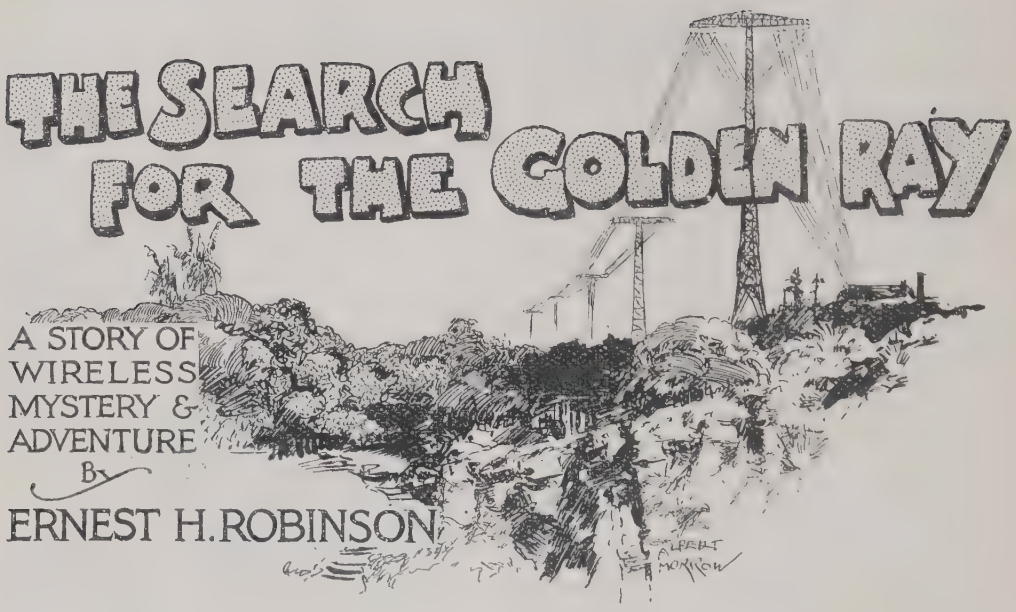
"Oh, dear, no!" I assured her. "Carrots would be the last person in the world to lead a dear innocent child astray. It was all an accident." . . . That was yesterday. To-day Carrots has just been to see me; he tells me that, by a wonderful coincidence, now that I have altered the date of my holiday it exactly fits in with his. It occurs to him, therefore, that the best thing would be for me to take Peter with me, and that he, Carrots, will come with us and mind him!

"Unfortunately he collided with the maid"

I stammered out my thanks, and said I would think of it. Carrots and Peter on the dickey seat! Carrots and Peter staying at the hotel by night, and getting up to mischief with the waiters; Peter and Carrots having afternoon tea in the lounge of the boarding-house, and showing people how to eat cake! Peter and——

Is there no way out? Would some kind friend take Peter—and Carrots—off my hands for two whole weeks? Or must it be that I career the country with two unruly youths sitting on the back of the car? Must the four of us call at the homes of my readers en route, and all the way to Wales and back bring dismay and disgrace to the Editor and the Den? Readers, what *shall* I do?

The Editor



CHAPTER V (*continued*)

Mutiny!

"BACK! Back into the cabin, everybody!" cried Dr. Bastable, realizing that the situation was desperate. He wished to avoid a fight, if possible. He did not know what to do.

The crew hesitated and bunched together as the man Smith turned on them with Grumble's revolver held menacingly in his fist. They would have tried to rush Smith but for Dr. Bastable's order.

Then came a hurry of feet on the roof of the wireless cabin. Baptiste, who had dashed up after Smith to prevent him from cutting the aerial lead-in, had seen what had happened and did not hesitate. He leaped from the roof of the cabin full at Smith, landing on his shoulders and bringing him to the deck with a crash. At the same moment another figure had launched itself from the clump of huddled men round the door of the wireless cabin. Bob Salters, not knowing that his chum, Baptiste, was on the war-path, had hurled himself at Smith, with the idea of wresting the revolver from him.

Bob jumped out at the mutineer at the very moment Baptiste landed. He was too late to stop himself, and tripped headlong over the pair of them as they rolled on the deck.

Then, with a deafening report, the revolver went off. The bullet buried itself, with a dull thud, in the port rail just abaft the wheel. There was a moment's deadly silence, for Bob, after one convulsive kick, twisted over and lay still. Not a soul moved. It seemed that tragedy had descended on the little *Radio*.

Then Grumbles sat up, stared for one brief second at his mate Smith and Baptiste, and then got to his knees, feeling in his belt for his knife.

At the self-same instant Bob came to life again. He rolled over, grabbed Grumbles by the leg and pulled him backwards, wresting the knife from his fingers and pitching it over the side.

With a cheer the startled crew, who had been paralysed into inactivity, leaped forward and threw themselves on the two mutineers. In about a minute by the *Radio's* chronometer the two men were bound and secure.

"And that's that!" said Dr. Bastable, as he undid the hatch against which the engineers were hammering, demanding to know what was going on. "Mutiny was about the last thing I expected. There is no harm done, luckily, owing to the promptness of Baptiste and Bob."

"And Joan! Mustn't forget Joan's top-hole left-handed shot with the paper weight!" Roger interjected.

"And Joan," said Dr. Bastable, smiling at his daughter, whose sprained right wrist was still bound up. "No, we mustn't forget Joan. It seems that we are greatly

indebted to the younger members of our little society. I suppose young brains move more quickly than older ones. Besides danger is, to them, to be met and not avoided. You are not hurt, are you, Bob? We thought that bullet had hit you."

"Never touched me, sir," said Bob, blushing as though he had been found out in some ill-doing. "It kind of knocked the wind out of me when I fell over Baptiste. That was all that was the matter."

Captain Trevallen, who was a very angry man, had been let out of his cabin, and was telling the two mutineers exactly what he thought of them. He promised them that they should be handed over to justice at the first port of call, and assured them that a long term in prison was the least punishment they could expect.

"You are not proper Cornishmen, that's certain!" he roared. "I don't believe you are Englishmen. I hope you aren't. I'd just hate to think that any British sailorman could act the way you have done. Ten years in jail you'll get, at the least. I hope it is penal servitude for life, you low-down, no-account pirates!"

"That will do, captain. Let me talk to them," said Dr. Bastable. "You are master of this yacht, but I want your permission to try an experiment with these two men. I should not like to think of anybody being put into prison when there may be some other way of dealing with them."

"Not put them in prison? Not give these dogs all they deserve?" cried Captain Trevallen. "What on earth do you mean, sir? Pardon me, Dr Bastable, but that is absurd."

"Nevertheless I want your permission to try my little experiment," insisted the scientist. Of course, Captain Trevallen had to give in. Though he was the captain and technically in command of every soul on the yacht, he could not very well refuse the request of the yacht's owner. He might have done so on the score that to let the men off would be to imperil further the lives of all on board, but he knew that Dr. Bastable was far too wise a man to do that.

"Very well then, sir, I'll leave them to you," he said, and turned to survey the full-rigged ship that Baptiste had sighted just when the trouble with the mutineers was at its highest. This ship was still a good many miles away.

Dr. Bastable gave a short command and the two men were unbound. Then he nodded to them to follow him to his cabin. What he there said to them no one ever knew; but Smith and Grumbles came out with very chastened mien, declaring that "the owner" was the finest man on earth, and that any fellow who said differently would have to answer to them.

The only information which Dr. Bastable gave was that the two mutineers were on probation, and that they were to be treated exactly as though nothing had happened. He had given them a chance to redeem themselves, and said he hoped that everyone on the yacht would do their best to help them.

From that moment onwards Smith and Grumbles were changed men. No task was too hard for them, and it was not long before they were amongst the smartest members of the little crew.

CHAPTER VI

An Anxious Time

"IT'S a fair licker to me," said Tom Allen, staring through his powerful glasses at the full-rigged ship which the *Radio* was approaching rapidly. She was now about a mile and a half away, and Tom Allen could see every detail clearly.

"Looks as though she is becalmed," suggested Roger, who, with Joan, stood by the mate's side in the bows of the yacht.

"She does and yet she doesn't," said Tom Allen. "What I can't make out is that there's not a sign of life about her. There she is, with every sail set, 'like a painted ship upon a painted ocean,' as some poetry-writing fellow says somewhere; but there's not a soul to be seen on her decks or anywhere about her. Looks to me like a dead ship."

"Probably another of the secrets of the Sargasso, Mr. Allen," said Dr. Bastable, who had come up quietly behind the little group. "If you direct your binoculars on to the sea surrounding that vessel, I think you will find that she is entangled and enmeshed in a patch of the dreaded Gulf weed—the *Sargassum bacciferum*, to give it its correct name—and that she is indeed a dead ship."

The mate scanned the water round the great ship eagerly and then handed the binoculars to the scientist.

"You are quite right, sir," he said.

"The weed is there, right enough. I ought to have thought of that before. But that doesn't account for the fact that she is deserted. If a ship sails into such a patch her crew can generally manage to cut her clear. If she is a derelict, as she seems to be, her crew probably left her before the slow Gulf currents caught her and drifted her into this deserted part of the ocean."

But Dr. Bastable was not listening to the mate. He was searching the ship intently. Then, taking his glasses from his eyes, he gave a sharp glance upwards at the *Radio's* aerial.

"I thought as much," he murmured, and the eyes of the others followed his immediately.

"The Golden Ray! The Golden Ray again!" cried Roger and Joan together, not attempting to suppress their excitement when they saw that the *Radio's* aerial was faintly glowing with the well-known radiance.

"I think—it is possible—that we are at the end of our search, youngsters," said the scientist slowly. "There is an aerial rigged up on that ship, and it is glowing even as ours is glowing, only rather more brightly. Watch her and see if you can discover anything. I must go to my instruments, measure strength of received current, direction, and things like that. Yes, I think it is likely that we are at the end of our search. The middle of the deserted Sargasso Sea is the very place for a wireless criminal to hide himself."

Dr. Bastable gave the binoculars back to the mate and strode off rapidly to the wireless cabin to make the delicate tests that he always attempted whenever the Golden Ray made its appearance.

Roger had darted below to fetch up a telescope, a more powerful instrument than the mate's binoculars. Before he returned to the deck he felt the engines of the yacht throbbing with increased power. Dr. Bastable had asked for more speed that they might investigate the mystery ship the quicker.

"Yes, there is an aerial slung between the main and foremasts of that ship," said Roger, when he had trained the telescope on the vessel. "But it doesn't look like much of a thing. I wonder what it can mean. Oh, I hope—I hope we haven't come to the end of our voyage yet. Why, we've only just started!"

"We shall know all about it soon enough," said Tom Allen. "I don't understand this wireless, and never did, though I've sailed with your father for many years now, Miss Joan. But if Dr. Bastable says that the fellow who is causing all the trouble is on that ship, well, I guess he is. What the owner says is usually right."

"He only suggested that it is possible that we are at the end of our search," Joan reminded them.

The *Radio* was coming up on the big ship hand over fist, and very soon they could see every detail of her without the aid of glasses. Though all her sails were set, they were ragged and discoloured and hung anyhow from their yards. Her sides were nearly white because the sun and the sea had blistered and worn all the paint from her woodwork. She seemed to be in the very centre of a huge patch of weed that extended for hundreds of yards in all directions.

"We can't get much nearer to her," Tom Allen declared when they were about a quarter of a mile away. "If we try we shall get our propellers all tangled up with the weed, and then goodness knows what will happen to us. It is a diving job to clear the propellers, and we have no diving gear on board. I expect Captain Trevallen will give the order to stop very soon."

He turned and looked towards the bridge, where Captain Trevallen stood anxiously scanning the water between the yacht and the derelict. There was no doubt that he was just as interested in the great vessel that had been caught in the mesh of the Sargasso weed; but he had his own craft to think about. He moved to the "telegraph" which communicated with the engine-room, and stood with his hand on the lever, ready to ring down the stop signal at a moment's notice.

"Stand by to lower the port boat!" he called. "Warn Dr. Bastable that we are as near as we can get. Mr. Allen! Here, please!"

"Aye, aye, sir," said Tom Allen, and made his way to the bridge.

"You'll have to make arrangements for cutting a path to that ship," Captain Trevallen told him. "The biggest knives we have, lashed to small booms, will do the trick. You will want something to rake the weed out of your path, too. Get busy, now, and make your preparations. You will go in command of the boat. Be careful. There is something about the look of that ship I don't like at all."

Joan had just made the very same

remark to Roger. Somehow or other the great full-rigged ship looked menacing, as though it was threatening the little intruder that was disturbing its long, death-like sleep in the killing embrace of the Gulf weed. There was a sickly smell in the air, too. The smell of rotting vegetation, of decay. There was not a breath of wind other than that made by the motion of the yacht, and a deadly mist seemed to rise from the water.

Captain Trevallen's hand moved on the telegraph and a bell clanged in the engine-room. Then, before it was possible that the order could have been obeyed, the engine came to an abrupt stop. One of the motors back-fired with a sound like a gun exploding, and then there was a dead silence save for the rapidly diminishing rush of ripples round the *Radio's* bows.

"Fouled up!" said Captain Trevallen. "Must be weed extending under the water out of the main bunch." He gave a sharp order and Tom Allen sprang to the boat, which was smartly lowered into the water. Her crew gave a couple of strokes and stopped at the yacht's stern. Joan and Roger ran back, past the bridge, past the hand steering gear, and hung over the taffrail, to see something of what was going on.

Tom Allen was hanging over the side of the boat, trying to feel down to the propellers with the blade of an oar.

Presently he looked up and saw them gazing at him. Captain Trevallen was also looking over the yacht's stern, anxious for a report.

"I'm afraid we're badly fouled, sir," said the mate. "The weed seems to be round both screws—miles of it. They're absolutely wrapped up in it, like a couple of cocoons. What will I do, sir?"

"Come aboard," said Captain Trevallen, his face troubled. "I shall have to think out some scheme, in consultation with the engineers. Reversing the engines might free us, but I doubt it."

Tom Allen came on board again, and the crew of the boat followed him, looking scared.

"There is one blessed thing that's certain, mate," said one to another, as they stood by the falls waiting for orders. "If we don't get clear of the weed we shall just stay here and rot. This is the sea's graveyard. Thousands of good ships have been caught, just as we are caught, and nothing has ever been heard of them again."

"Not if they had wireless, they wasn't," answered the other, with a grin and a nod towards the *Radio's* aerial, still faintly glowing with the mysterious Golden Ray. "Not if they had wireless, matey! If the skipper can't clear us on his own the boss will send out a call and we shall have someone coming to help us in less than

"'You have come to take me home,' he cried" (p. 242)

Drawn by Albert Morrow

half no time. There's many a man been called 'the sailor's friend' before now, but I reckon the greatest of them all is this here Seegnore Marconi! Don't you worry, matey. We shall be jolly well all right!"

Dr. Bastable had come on deck and was now in consultation with the captain. He was gazing towards the derelict and did not seem very interested in the calamity that had befallen the yacht.

"You must do the best you can, Trevallen," he said. "I want to get on board that ship as quickly as I can. I haven't been able to find out much from my instruments. The power of the Ray is weak compared with some of my previous measurements; but it seems to be coming straight from the derelict. I want to investigate at once. Will you give the necessary orders, please?"

Joan and Roger stood near the boat, hoping that the scientist would see them and give them permission to accompany him. They knew better than to ask, because they saw that he was deep in thought. He walked to the side and looked over into the boat. Then, as the crew came tumbling up to man her, he lowered himself over the side and sat down in the stern. Then he looked up.

"You can come, if you like, youngsters," he said, with a little smile as he noted their eager faces. "I don't know what we shall find, but it will be an adventure for you to see what the Sargasso Sea can do to its prisoners."

Joan and Roger tumbled into the boat so quickly that Tom Allen, who had taken his place by the side of Dr. Bastable, had to stretch out a hand to prevent Roger from shooting clean over the side into the sea.

"That's no way to get into a boat," he said. "You might have broken your leg, or knocked a hole in her planking. You've still a lot to learn before you're a proper sailor man, my son. Give way, there!"

The crew dug their oars into the still water and drove the boat towards the derelict. They soon had to stop, though, and take up the long-handled knives that had been prepared. It was weary work, for every inch of their path had to be hacked out of the thickly matted weed. But for the fact that they were anxious to get on board the mysterious derelict, Joan and Roger would have enjoyed every minute of that fight. They did yeoman service with knives and rakes until their hands were so blistered with the unaccustomed toil that they had to give up and just look on.

The weed seemed fairly alive with all sorts and kinds of mysterious sea creatures. There were tiny shrimp-like things that rose in leaping clouds every time a knife was driven into a mass of weed, there were brightly coloured fishes that darted through the cleared spaces like flashes of living fire, blue and green and red, and once they saw the ugly head of a sea-snake.

"Don't touch anything," Dr. Bastable warned them. "Some of these creatures are very poisonous. See that little fellow there!" He pointed as he spoke to a darting yellow fish with bright scarlet bands down his sides. "If you as much as touch one of his spines you will get a dose of poison that will make your whole body swell horribly. Even those things that look like luscious black grapes will produce dreadful sores on your hands and arms if you touch them."

"Yus, that's right, sir," said one of the crew. "Most of them things is death to touch; but I have heard that the worst of all is them octopusses. Fair swarms of them there are, sometimes, with arms on 'em as thick as a man's leg, and yards long."

"Ah, that will be the giant squid," said Dr. Bastable. "I'd like to see one—not too close, though. 'Whales' meat,' the south sea whalers call them. Some of the big whales live on them almost exclusively. Ever read 'The Cruise of the *Chachalot*,' Roger?"

Roger said that he had read that wonderful book and added that though he would like to see one of the big squids he would prefer to do it from the deck of a big ship through a telescope.

Meanwhile, the work of cutting and raking went on unceasingly, and though their progress was slow they got gradually nearer and nearer to the derelict. There was still not the slightest sign of life to be seen on board her. The glow of the Golden Ray had disappeared from her aerial, though, and Dr. Bastable, who had brought a small transmitting and receiving set with him in the boat, reported that he could hear signals again, proving that the Ray had now cleared away. Suddenly a look of intense interest appeared on his face as he listened through the phones which he had adjusted over his ears.

"Funny! There are very strong signals coming through, but they are not Morse, I think, though they are in dots and dashes. Here, Joan, see if you can make anything of them."

Joan took the phones and heard, as her father had said, very strong signals, but with the dots and dashes all jumbled up so that they only seemed to make a real Morse letter every now and again. She shook her head as she tried to write down in long hand what she was reading.

"The proper note has gone now," she said. "It was all a mess-up, anyhow. It was 'spark,' father, and I believe—I believe it comes from that ship!"

Dr. Bastable nodded and took the phones again. But the signals had ceased and he could only hear a distant ship, fifty or a hundred miles away, rattling out a message to another, whose reply he could not get on the small portable set.

"Like—like a madman trying to send Morse. Yes, that was what it sounded like," he said thoughtfully. "It was not the sending of a beginner. When a real letter came it seemed as though it had got in by an accident."

"Didn't the Germans send meaningless jumbles of letters during the war to jamb our messages?" asked Roger. "Perhaps this person, whoever he is, is not satisfied with the mischief he is doing with his Golden Ray, and is trying to jamb out all the ships' messages."

"I don't think that is likely," said Dr. Bastable. "You see, Roger, a highly skilled operator would send letters, real letters in Morse code, even if he did send them jumbled. His highly trained fingers would not permit him to send out such stuff as Joan and I have just been listening to. But that was a good thought of yours. Yes, the Germans did try to jamb our messages, and we tried to jamb theirs, and succeeded, too. There's another thing. Those signals seemed very strong to us, because we are so close to the ship; but they are really very weak. I doubt if they could be read more than ten or fifteen miles. Well, we shall know all about it in a few minutes now."

The boat was close to the side of the great ship, which towered above them from its clinging bed of weeds like a very giant. She was a big wooden ship of a build not often seen in these days. Tom Allen guessed that she was at least sixty years old, and perhaps more. At her bows, under her bowsprit, a huge figurehead grinned down at them—a gigantic carving representing a woman dressed in armour. They could see no name; but that would be on her stern, if it had not been obliterated by the sun and wind and spray.

A few more sturdy cuts at the weed, a few more powerful strokes with the improvised rakes, and the boat touched the side of this mystery ship. They had made for a spot where a rope hung down almost to the water's edge.

"It is a boat fall. The crew must have left by the boats, when they did go," said Tom Allen. "I expect it is rotten; but I'll try to climb aboard by it and take the ladder with me, so that you can all come up."

He seized the rope as he spoke and tested it.

"Seems pretty sound," he said. "It's been a bit of good stuff in its time. I think it will bear me."

With that he seized the rope and swarmed up it with a skill that made Roger very envious. He reached the gunwale without mishap, and then made fast the rope ladder they had brought with them and let it down the side of the ship. One by one they went up, leaving one of the crew to mind the boat. This was hardly necessary, as the weed had closed in on them again, not thickly, but sufficiently to keep the boat where she was; but boats at sea, in such a situation, are never left unattended, in case anything goes wrong with them.

"The *Amazon*, of Glasgow," said Dr. Bastable, reading a hardly visible name and port on a lifebelt that was still in position on the poop rails. "Well, we know what ship we are on. Now to see what other discoveries we can make. Stick together. We don't know what may be before us."

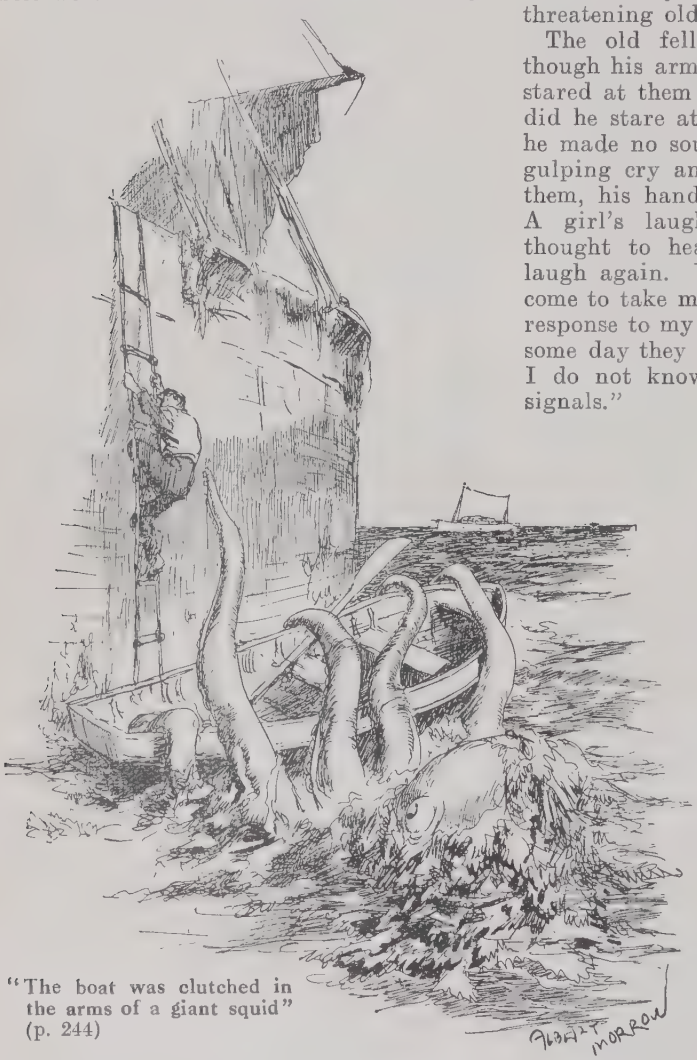
CHAPTER VII

A Friend—in Mid Ocean!

"THIEVES and pirates! Bloodthirsty thieves and pirates! You shall walk the plank, every man jack of you!"

The little group on the deck of the gaunt old ship turned as one man at the sound of the shrill voice that broke the silence so unexpectedly. They beheld the strangest figure that they had ever seen outside of the pages of an illustrated tale of old-time adventure.

A man—an old man he seemed to be—stood at the head of the companion-way. Round his head was a wisp of scarlet cloth, and round his middle, holding together a pair of tattered trousers and a ragged blue shirt, was another length of the same scarlet material. In this waist-belt were stuck three knives and a rusty-looking revolver. One hand clutched at a long white beard that descended half-way down his chest, whilst in the other he brandished a shiny sword of an old-fashioned make. On his shoulder sat a blue-and-scarlet parrot.



"The boat was clutched in the arms of a giant squid" (p. 244)

"Thieves and pirates! Thieves and pirates!" yelled the quaint old fellow again, and the wicked-looking parrot took up the cry.

"Thieves and pirates! Death to the pirates! To the plank with the pirates!" it squawked. Then it turned its head sideways. "Pretty Polly! Pretty Polly! Polly wants a kiss!"

At this Joan laughed. She just had to, though, along with the others, she had been bewildered by the sudden appearance of the threatening old man.

The old fellow dropped his sword as though his arm had been struck down and stared at them wonderingly. Particularly did he stare at Joan. For some moments he made no sound. Then he gave a great gulping cry and came staggering towards them, his hands outstretched. "A laugh! A girl's laugh!" he cried. "I never thought to hear the sound of a human laugh again. You have come! You have come to take me home! You have come in response to my wireless calls. I knew that some day they must be heard, even though I do not know how to make the proper signals."

Dr. Bastable stepped forward and grasped the trembling hands of the old man. Tears were coursing down the old fellow's cheeks. He seemed overcome with emotion.

"Yes, we've come to rescue you," said the scientist kindly. "But who are you? How did you come here?"

Again the old man stared at them wonderingly, shaking his head as though he did not understand the question.

"Who are you? How did you come on this ship—this abandoned ship?" asked Dr. Bastable again.

"Me? I'm Old Bones! Old Billy Bones, King of the Pirates!" was the astonishing reply.

"Old Billy Bones! Old Billy Bones!" shrieked the parrot, clinging to his shoulder. "Make 'em walk the plank!"

The strange old fellow turned and made for his sword. But Tom Allen was too quick for him. He stepped forward and seized it, jerking the knives from the fellow's belt as he passed and sending them spinning over the side.

"Quietly, Allen, quietly," said Dr. Bastable. "The poor old man is mad, I think. At least, his brain is seriously deranged. He was sane enough for a few moments, before I asked him who he was and sent his mind wandering again."

"Billy Bones" made a dash at Tom Allen, shouting furiously. The mate dodged him easily enough, but that only made the old fellow more angry than ever. He made another furious dash, and again Tom Allen twisted out of the way, slipping behind Joan. This was the very best thing he could have done, for the old man stopped dead in his tracks when he came face to face with her. For the space of twenty seconds he stared into her eyes. Then his hand trembled to his forehead, as though he expected to find there a hat he could lift.

"I'm sure I—I beg your pardon, my dear," he said. "I—that is——" He looked round him wildly, as though totally unfamiliar with his surroundings. Joan stepped forward shyly and touched his arm.

"It is all right. It is quite all right. We have come to fetch you," she said softly.

"What, am I late again? Didn't know I had a lecture this afternoon," was the reply, almost as astonishing to the listeners as his first amazing announcement that he was "king of the pirates." "But I don't seem to know your face, my dear. But then I always forget everything, don't I? Well, come along. We mustn't keep the young ladies waiting."

"Langly! It's Langly, of Oxford!" whispered Dr. Bastable wonderingly. "What a miracle! What a miracle! He was supposed to have gone down, with all hands, when the vessel he was coming from America in struck an iceberg. Great Jupiter! To find him like this, after three years!"

Though Dr. Bastable had only whispered the name the old man heard it. He turned and stared at the scientist.

"Yes, I'm Langly; but I don't seem to know you," he said. Then again his eyes swept round the ship. "I don't—I don't seem to know anything!"

"Old Billy Bones! Old Billy Bones!" croaked the parrot. "Make 'em walk the plank!"

At that the wavering mind of the old college professor lost its grip again and he imagined himself a pirate. Until Dr. Bastable succeeded in persuading him that they were new members of his crew he made the air fairly ring with the most bloodcurdling threats as to what he was going to do with them. When at last he was satisfied that they were friends he allowed himself to be led below.

He took them proudly to his cabin, and there they found the solution of one mystery, and that was how a respectable professor of chemistry came to imagine he was a pirate. In his cabin they saw some hundreds of tattered paper volumes, most of them pirate yarns of the fiercest and most bloodthirsty kind. Dr. Bastable hazarded a guess that they had been left behind by some youthful member of the crew, and that, for want of better reading matter, Professor Langly had read them again and again, until, his brain giving way because of his loneliness, he had come to imagine himself a pirate.

"Now for the Golden Ray!" said Dr. Bastable, when he had seen the poor old madman happily engaged in showing his treasures to Tom Allen. "Even when his brain has lost its balance old Langly would be capable of more cleverness than the average man. I bet he has found some wireless apparatus somewhere and has been experimenting until, at last, he has discovered this mischief-making ray."

They easily discovered the secret of the ship's wireless by the simple expedient of examining the makeshift aerial slung between the two masts and noting where the down lead went to. But it was not much of a discovery, after all, except that it showed the amazing ingenuity of the old chemist.

Sailing ships do not, as a rule, carry wireless apparatus, because steam is generally necessary to generate the power for transmitting. However, amongst the cargo in the hold the old man had evidently discovered some electrical apparatus. Out of this he had rigged up a marvellous arrangement that would act as a transmitter. The power was supplied by a hand-driven dynamo, a toy to which the old man had fitted a gearing from a sewing machine.

"He must have spent hours and hours fitting up this arrangement before his brain went," said Dr. Bastable. "There is no receiving set, you see. Evidently he could not find out any way of making a detector."

"He wouldn't have any phones, anyhow," said Roger. "So a detector wouldn't have been of much use to him."

"What a wonderful man!" cried Joan, who had been examining the makeshift transmitting set with eager eyes. "I think he is a dear, and most awfully clever. Oh, father, you must get his poor brain to work again! You must!"

"I'm no medicine man, my dear," said Dr. Bastable. "But I will do my best, you can depend on that. But I have my search to think of first of all. There is no answer to the mystery of the Golden Ray to be found in this collection of marvels, ingenious as they are. We shall have to hark forrard, Joan, even if it takes us round the world. The first thing, though, is to persuade old Langly to come with us. I think you will be able to manage that. Then we shall have to clear our propellers. No easy job we shall find that, I am afraid. And then on the track of the Golden Ray again."

As he spoke there came a dreadful yell and then a rush of feet on the deck. They dashed out, to see the scattered members of the boat's crew rushing to the side and staring down at the tiny craft that had brought them to the ship. They too rushed to the side.

A dreadful sight met their eyes.

The boat was clutched in the arms of a giant squid and was being drawn under the water. The man who had been in her was clinging to the rope ladder. By the side of the boat they could see the dreadful eyes of the sea devil staring upwards as it stretched a long, sucker-armed feeler to draw the man down again.

(*To be continued*)

IT ISN'T A BIT COLD

So hurry up and join us, do!

THE KING OF THE CASTLE

Holiday-makers at the Little Folks Home, Bexhill-on-Sea

TO THE PALACE UNDER THE SEA

(Drawn by Florence Mary Anderson)

THE ADVENTURES of BINGO DOG

By CONSTANCE EGAN

NO. 4.—THE PEKE SPOILS IT ALL

BINGO DOG, you remember, had caught a burglar just entering the Manor House, and next morning he found himself a sort of V.C. hero of a dog. He felt no end of a fellow.

He might have been a prize dog with a pedigree a yard long, the way he was treated. He was bathed by the under footman in hot water; washed with beautiful scented soap; rubbed dry with warm towels, and brushed as he had never been brushed before. Then he was introduced to the family.

There were two children, a boy and girl, and a very beautiful mother; the father Bingo had met the night before, over the burglar episode.

The children went mad over Bingo Dog.

"Isn't he a scream!" laughed the boy. "What breed would you call him, mum?"

"I'm afraid I shouldn't call him anything but a mongrel," smiled the mother.

"Nevertheless, he's an excellent watch-dog," put in the father. "I shall communicate with the police, and if the dog is not claimed I shall keep him."

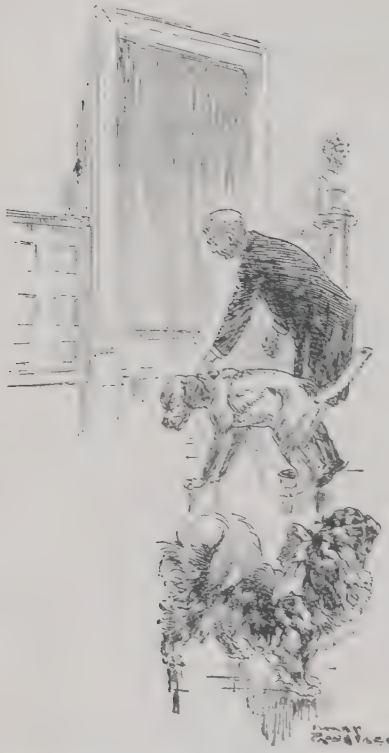
Bingo was given a bowl of milk and some biscuits while the family had breakfast. He felt immensely pleased with himself. He forgot he was nothing but an outsize in mongrels; he forgot he had ever been threatened with the Dogs' Home.

And then, if you please, in came Peko.

Peko, as no doubt you have already guessed, was a Pekinese. And if there was one thing in this world that Bingo Dog disliked more than cats, it was a Pekinese.

Now, Peko was no ordinary Peke, he was a king among his kind. He had a pedigree a mile long, and had won the first prize at every dog show in the country. His coat was a beautiful goldy-brown colour, the hair like glossy silk; and his tail was the most perfect ever worn by Peke. He wore a huge orange bow on his collar.

Well, Peko the Wonderful was brought in by the butler. The little



"Jenkins, the butler, took charge of Bingo"

girl immediately slipped off her chair, although she hadn't yet finished her porridge. (I'm afraid she was a dreadfully spoilt child, and did all sorts of things she shouldn't.)

"Joyce, sit down," said her mother.

"But, mummy, I must just introduce Peko to the strange dog," she cried, and she ran and picked up the precious little animal.

"Come along, ducksy-wucksy, an' say how do to strange doggie," she said.

Peko looked at Bingo, then with head in air, so that his snubby nose turned up more than ever, he put out his tongue at our darling hero of a Bingo.

"Impossible mongrel!" he sniffed, which wasn't well-bred, although he was a "Prize"; and Joyce wiped his nose with a little orange silk hanky!

"*Grrrrr!*" growled Bingo, the hair on his back rising; "I'd like to *bite* you!" And he would have done it, too, if the small boy hadn't collared him.

"Take that dog to the kitchen, please, Jenkins," said the mother. And Jenkins, the butler, took charge of Bingo.

As he was dragged from the room, Bingo saw his enemy the Peke sitting on a blue satin cushion, drinking warm milk out of a silver bowl!

"Bye-bye, little Miss Muffet," he yapped; "sorry I can't stay to be the spider, *I'd* frighten you, you worm! I'd take the sneer off your ugly face; I'd . . ."

Jenkins quietly closed the dining-room door.

Soon after that Bingo Dog slipped out of the kitchen unnoticed, and went prowling around. He found Tishy, the little green lizard, in the greenhouse.

"Hello, me old green slip ——" he began, and broke off. Tishy hated to be called a slipper, because once he was very nearly made into one. But he really was rather like the old slipper Bingo had carried away from Laburnum Cottage and buried in the strange garden.

"Hello, me old sleepy head!" he corrected himself quickly. "You found a good spot here, what?"

"Yes, most noble Bingo," piped Tishy, "there are green-fly and insects and lovely plants. I think I shall stay here for ever, but"—he broke off suddenly and blinked his beady eyes at Bingo—"how wonderful you look! So white and smooth and beautiful."

Bingo Dog wagged his long tail with pleasure and smiled lovingly on his little friend.

"Had a bit of a shampoo this morning," he said in an off-hand manner. "Pretty decent place this. Parents admire me. Children ready to adore me. There's only one drawback." Bingo's voice dropped to a low growl.

"What's that?" asked Tishy.

"A nasty, long-haired, short-legged, snub-nosed, sniffing beast of a Chinaman," grumbled Bingo.

"A Chinaman?" squeaked Tishy in alarm.

"Pekinese," said Bingo shortly. "Can't think why they keep such an animal."

"Perhaps they like him," suggested Tishy mildly.

"Well, I *don't!*" snapped Bingo. "I'll teach him to sneer at me, you see if I don't."

"But you won't hurt him, will you?" squeaked Tishy.

"Hurt him!" growled Bingo; "*hurt* him! Why, there won't be anything left to hurt by the time I've done with him."

It was really dreadful of Bingo to say a thing like that, but he always does say rather more than he means. Besides, you can't expect a mongrel like Bingo Dog to take to a prize pedigree Peke like Peko. And, anyway, Bingo didn't really hurt Peko at all. I'm telling you this now, so that you needn't run upstairs and fetch a clean hanky to wipe away tears shed for the poor Peke.

What actually happened was this: The master of the house informed the police about Bingo. Nobody claimed him. He was adopted by the family. He was taken for walks by the girl and boy, but always on a lead. They thought that because he was a stray, if they let him run alone, he might stray again, and they did not want to lose him. Bingo didn't like this arrangement at all, he longed to run free.

Then, after that first greeting, he was never allowed in the same room with Peko the Wonderful, unless firmly held by the collar by someone. Bingo didn't like this either, he wanted to get at his enemy.

Tishy the green lizard was happy enough for a week, living on insects and green-fly, among the lovely plants. Then one night they burnt a curious lamp all night in the greenhouse. The smell of it made Tishy feel very, very sick (I wonder it did not kill him), and it killed all the insects and green-fly in the place. So in one night bang went Tishy's future breakfasts, dinners, teas and suppers.

He escaped from the greenhouse and was found in the garden by Tony the small boy.

The excitement of Tony and Joyce over Tishy was enormous. They petted him and fed him, and played with him. Tishy was the pet of the moment, Bingo was almost forgotten.

And then one awful day Bingo heard the father say:

"I think that dog's too big for the house."

("Rubbish!" snorted Bingo, "it's the largest house I've ever seen. It fits me beautifully!")

"He'd much better live in a kennel outside," continued the father, paying not the least attention to the

"Sure enough, Bingo drove that wretched Peke right into the water" (p. 250)

mutterings of Bingo; "he's an excellent watch-dog."

"Be chained to a kennel for the rest of my life?" growled Bingo. "No thank *you*, sir; not this dog."

And then poor Tishy, after leaving the greenhouse, was kept in the nursery in a wooden box with grass in it, and a wire netting over the top so he couldn't get out. Tishy, who loved to bask in the sun and search for insects! True, the children took him out in the garden, and played with him, but they kept such a sharp eye on him.

No sooner did he climb on to the rockery than they picked him off, in case he should hurt the plants.

No sooner did he crawl on to a flower bed after some fat grub than they pulled him back on to the lawn.

"I'm only waiting for an opportunity of telling off that Peke," said Bingo, "then we'll clear out, and seek a home and fortune elsewhere. I'm fed-up with this place."

"I'm not fed-up enough," squeaked Tishy; "haven't had a really good feed since I left that greenhouse. They give me all the wrong things. Whoever heard of a lizard eating roast beef! But you won't go without me, Bingo, will you?"

"Rather not," barked our friend "we'll be off one day when the kids are exercising you in the garden. But I'd like to have a go at that Chinaman first."

His opportunity came that very day.

Tony brought Tishy into the garden, and then Joyce fetched Peko the Wonderful, just to see what he would say to the funny little lizard.

Peko yapped shrilly when he saw Tishy, and danced around in huge excitement, but not too near, because he was afraid.

"Call that a dog!" thought Tishy; "why he's not an inch like my noble Bingo!"

My noble Bingo, who had not yet been chained to a kennel, was at that moment trotting around the garden.

He heard the shrill yap of the despised Chinaman, and was on the spot in a trice.

Peko saw him coming and bolted down the garden, tail between legs and ears back, like a frightened rabbit. Bingo, barking joyously, raced after him, but not too fast. He could have caught Peko easily, he was only a tail's length away, but he didn't want to, he wanted to drive that bewildered little Pekinese into the river at the end of the garden.

"I'll teach him to be a dog. Bet he's never had a decent swim in his life," barked Bingo. And, sure enough, he drove that wretched Peke right into the water.

Peko squealed, floundered, and then swam—he *had* to swim!

"Bravo!" shouted Bingo, forgetting his dislike of the Peke; "go it, young 'un! Swim to the other side and back, and I'll promise never to worry you again."

Peko swam to the bank and back. He came out of the water a bedraggled, panting, shivering little creature. Joyce cried over him a little.

"It was that horrid mongrel chased him," she said.

Tony fetched a towel and rubbed him down.

"Ta, ta, old bean!" laughed Bingo; "sorry I've been so rude to you. You're not such a muff after all. Keep your tail up and be a dog. 'Fraid I can't stop, though; those kids'd never forgive me for teaching you to swim."

Then he turned tail, raced back to the lawn, picked up Tishy and fled. Way down the long drive, through the beautiful park they went. The park gates were opened for a car to drive in. Bingo dodged through and out on to the high road.

Once more Tishy and Bingo were seeking their fortunes and a home together.

(To be continued)

Winning her Colours

By CHRISTINE CHAUNDLER

CHAPTER X

Pip Makes a Promise

"PIP MARTIN is wanted at once in Miss Druce's study," announced Edith Hart, of Middle Fourth, poking her head through the door of the Lower Fourth sitting-room just before tea one afternoon.

Four B was so startled that it quite forgot to be indignant at Edith's neglect to knock at the door. One of the chief causes of Four B's perpetual feud with Middle Four was the arrogant insistence by the older form of its right to open its juniors' door without knocking.

"Pip's wanted? What for? What have you been up to now, Pip?" asked Rita.

"Haven't the remotest," said Pip, scrambling up from the hearthrug, where she had been lying curled up in front of the fire sharing a story-book with Aileen. It was a hopelessly wet afternoon, and hockey practices and walks and all other forms of outdoor exercise having been declared "off," the members of the various forms had been passing their recreation time in their sitting-rooms, engaged in reading and writing and needlework and other indoor occupations.

"Pip, what have you been doing? Is it a row, do you think?" Aileen asked anxiously.

Pip shook her head, frowning in a puzzled way.

"I can't think of anything. I've really been frightfully pi the last few weeks. I've not done anything really bad since the night when I ragged—the night when I was stood out at supper and Miss Druce sent me early to bed."

"Do you think perhaps Sheila has found out and gone and told Miss Druce?" Aileen said in a low tone.

Again Pip shook her head.

"I don't think it can be that. I don't believe Sheila would take it up to the Head now, anyway, even if she found out. Anyhow, I'm sure she'd tell me first. She's been so awfully decent to me lately."

Pip crossed the room and set off in some trepidation in the direction of the head mistress's room, racking her brains as she went along as to what this unexpected summons could be due, and coming fearfully to the conclusion that the ragging of Sheila's study was her only unaccounted-for sin.

"Oh dear! I do hope it isn't that just now," Pip prayed fervently as she tapped on the panels of the head mistress's door.

It wasn't that. It wasn't, in fact, a row at all. When Pip entered the room, a tall gentleman rose from a chair in which he had been sitting and looked at the little girl searchingly. Miss Druce, who was sitting opposite to him, instead of in her usual place behind her desk, smiled at Pip pleasantly and said: "Ah, Philippa.

come in, my dear. We want you." While Sheila Morris came forward to meet her temporary fag.

"Father, this is Pip," she said. And putting her hand on Pip's shoulder, she pushed her gently across the room to the spot where the gentleman stood.

"So this is Pip," said the gentleman, as he took the rather inky hand Pip held out to him. He gazed down at her gravely, and Pip peeped up at him from under her eyelashes and felt most unaccountably shy and embarrassed. When you came to think of it, it was, of course, the most natural thing in the world that Mr. Morris should want to see his daughter after her narrow escape on the railway, and that he should come down to school to do so, and to thank her rescuer. But, somehow, out of all the possible and impossible reasons for which the Head might have wanted her, this reason alone had not occurred to Pip, and the surprise brought on an attack of shyness—a malady from which the black sheep of Four B did not often suffer.

"So this is Pip," repeated the gentleman. "My dear, you are a—a very brave little girl—a very brave little girl indeed. I really do not know how to thank you for the—ah—the very brave way in which you saved my daughter's life."

He looked, indeed, as if he did not know, and suddenly Pip realized that he was feeling quite as shy, if not shyer than she was herself. The realization drove away her own embarrassment in a moment, and lifting her head she smiled at Sheila's father in her usual frank and friendly way.

"That's all right," she said. "You needn't bother to thank me. It wasn't really very brave of me—it was just my luck in thinking of it—that, and having such sharp teeth. Anybody could have done it who had had teeth as sharp as mine."

Mr. Morris laughed.

"They certainly look very strong little teeth," he said, set more at his ease by Pip's speech. "It was a very happy thing for me and for Sheila that you possessed such a splendid set. And that you had wit enough to think of using them! But, all the same, I shall certainly bother to thank you—and you must let me do something for you, too, to show my gratitude. Tell me, is there anything you especially want that I could give you? Anything upon which you have set your heart?"

All sorts of things came into Pip's mind! Roller skates, a fountain pen, an album to hold the collection of postcard photographs of cinema actresses which she and Susie and Aileen were making. A new writing-case—her own was so dreadfully shabby and battered about—a manicure set, a three-speed bike, a dog for her very own! But though there were heaps and heaps of things she was wanting most especially, Pip did not hesitate in her reply. All the heroines in story-books she had ever read or heard of, had but one reply to make to a question of that kind. And Pip, who, in spite of the modesty of her speech to Mr. Morris, certainly did regard herself as a heroine, put away the alluring visions that floated before her eyes and heroically followed in the story-book heroines' footsteps.

"Thank you very much, but I didn't do it for any reward," she said firmly.

Mr. Morris looked surprised and a little disappointed.

"But surely you will let me give you something? Some small present—surely there is something you would like? No? Well, suppose I give you a little money to buy something for yourself? Won't you let me do that? It would be a very great pleasure indeed to me to do something to show you how very grateful I am."

"There is no reason why you should not let Mr. Morris give you a small present, Philippa," said Miss Druce, looking amused.

Pip, better versed apparently than she in the proper conduct of heroines, turned a reproachful face towards the Head.

"Oh, no, Miss Druce, I couldn't! People never do, not nice people! If I was very poor it might be different. But, you see, I'm not. I haven't even a widowed mother or any orphaned brothers and sisters to make an excuse."

Sheila giggled, Mr. Morris laughed outright, and Miss Druce tried to restrain a smile as she looked at the visitor.

"I am afraid, Mr. Morris, that you will have to relinquish your idea," she said. "After all, there is something to be said for Philippa's point of view."

"Perhaps there is," agreed Sheila's father, with an answering smile. "Well, if she will not accept a present from me, Sheila and I must put our heads together and see if we can't think of some other way to reward her for her bravery. And, anyway, Miss Philippa, you can't refuse to

accept mine and Sheila's heartfelt gratitude and thanks."

Pip couldn't refuse those, and she accepted them gracefully. And then tea arrived, and Pip found to her awed delight that she was expected to stay and partake of it, which she did, chuckling inwardly at the thought of the surprise her friends in Four B would have in a little while.

"For they'll all think I'm having the most awful wigging," she thought, as she ate delicate slices of thin bread-and-butter and munched little pink sugar cakes, with walnuts on the top and some delicious creamy mixture inside, such as the other members of Four B were certainly not consuming in the dining-hall. "They'll think I've been sent to bed or something for a punishment. They'll never dream I'm having tea with the Head!"

And she grew quite eager for tea to be over and Mr. Morris gone, so that she might return to the sitting-room and inform her friends of the great honour that had fallen to her share. Not one of the members of Four B had ever before, so far as Pip could remember, had tea with the Head.

She did not have to wait very long. As soon as tea was over, Mr. Morris rose to go, saying that he must not miss his train; and Sheila, at Miss Druce's suggestion, went to put on her outdoor things so that she might go with her father to the station. While she was away, the headmistress was called out of the room for a minute or two to speak to somebody in the hall. Pip was left alone with Sheila's father, and Mr. Morris took the opportunity of telling Pip again how grateful he felt towards her.

"Sheila is my only child—all that I have," he said. "If anything had happened to her that night I do not know how I should have borne it. I wish, my dear child, that you would let me do something for you? Something substantial—worthy of being put against my little girl's life. Are you quite sure that there is nothing? Surely there must be something that you would like?"

But Pip remained proof against all temptation, and at last Mr. Morris gave up his attempt to persuade her to accept some gift.

"Well," he said, taking Pip's hand in his. "At least, promise me this: If at any future time there is anything I can do for you, you must promise to come and let me know. Do not hesitate to come to me. Whatever you ask I will do it, if it is in my power. I will never refuse a request from Sheila's plucky little friend. Will you promise me that?"

There was no harm in promising that. Indeed, it was quite in keeping with the story-book moral code. The heroine's would-be benefactors generally did make her promise to appeal to them should she ever be in need of any help. So Pip promised faithfully, and then, Miss Druce returning, she said good-bye to Sheila's father and ran back to the Lower Fourth sitting-room—little thinking of how soon and in what manner she would be claiming the promised reward.

CHAPTER XI

Something Wrong with Sheila

"I'M fearfully sorry I'm late, Sheila," said Pip, coming breathlessly into Study Seven just before tea one afternoon a week or two later, to perform her fagging duties.

Sheila, who had been lying back in her armchair, sat up with a start.

"Are you late?" she asked in an absent-minded manner.

"Yes, but really it isn't my fault. It's Miss Parr's. She gave us ever such a long hockey practice to-day. There's only a week now, you know, till the match against Halton, and she's still not filled the vacancy. She says she *thinks* she'll let me play, but she won't say outright that I'm to be in the team, and I'm most frightfully anxious about it. Are you going to have tea in here or are you coming into the dining-hall?"

"I'm going to have it here. Buck up and fill the kettle, there's a good kid."

Pip hurried off obediently with the kettle, but when she returned with it filled, she was still engrossed with the subject of hockey.

"Is it to-night that you're going to have your games meeting?" she asked, as, having lighted the spirit stove and put the kettle upon it, she knelt down in front of the fire with a slice of bread and toasting-fork. "And will you be discussing the team for the Halton match, do you think?"

"Yes, I expect so," said Sheila, staring abstractedly into the fire.

Pip breathed a sigh of suspense.

"Oh dear! I do hope you'll choose me! How do you choose, Sheila? Do you all vote for the players when there's a vacancy to be filled, or what?"

"I don't know for certain. I expect Meg and Christabel and Miss Parr will do all the choosing there is to be done. I don't suppose we shall vote. Anyway, I shan't. I've only been up to the field once or twice this term, and I haven't the least idea which of the runners-up for the Second Team plays the best."

Pip looked up curiously at her senior.

"Why haven't you been up more often?" she demanded. "You're on the Games Committee and you used to be keen on hockey. Aren't you keen on it any longer?"

"Take care, you're burning that toast," said Sheila.

Pip impatiently flicked the toasting-fork a little farther away from the fire.

"Why aren't you keen any more? You were keen enough in the beginning of the term. Why aren't you keen now?"

"Keen on what?" asked Sheila.

Pip laid the toasting-fork down altogether.

"Hockey!" she said. "Sheila, I don't believe you've been listening to a single word I've been saying!"

Sheila aroused herself with an effort.

"Sorry, kiddie. I'm afraid I haven't been listening very attentively," she confessed.

Pip abandoned the subject of hockey, and picked up the toasting-fork again.

"Have you got a headache?" she asked sympathetically.

"No—that is, yes. I believe I have got a bit of a head."

"I thought you had. Your eyes look so funny. Would you like some eau-de-Cologne for it? Lucy Wetherall's got some I could borrow for you if you like; if you'd give me permission to go up to the dormitory."

"Oh, no, thanks. My head isn't bad enough to need eau-de-Cologne. Tea will cure it, I expect. Look out, you're burning that toast again!"

In her sympathy about the headache, Pip had thrust the slice of bread against the bars of the grate, and a horrible smell of burning arose. One side of the toast was reduced almost to charcoal, but Pip was not unduly distressed.

"Never mind, I'll scrape it. You can get off quite a lot of the black if you scrape hard enough," she said cheerfully. And groping about in the pocket of the gym. tunic she was wearing, she presently produced a penknife from amongst a miscellaneous assortment of other things.

"Hallo, you've got a knife now, then. I thought you'd lost yours," said Sheila, lazily watching Pip struggling with a rather stiff blade.

"Yes, so I had. But this is a new one. Miss Fernell made us all get them for physiology class. We're doing dissecting this term in Four B. It's rather fun. We're allowed to bring in dead things we find out-of-doors and dissect them—as long as they're not too dead, you know. We dissected a frog this morning."

"With that knife! Pip, you little horror! Fancy dreaming of scraping my toast with a knife you've dissected a dead frog with! Go and get a proper knife out of the cupboard at once. If you ever dare to do such a thing again I won't let you fag for me any longer."

"It's all right. It's quite clean. I wiped it on my pocket-handkerchief before I shut it up," protested Pip. However, she went across to the cupboard, and, after some fumbling amongst Sheila's belongings, produced a proper knife, with which she proceeded to scrape off the worst of the black. This done, she turned the slice of bread and settled down in front of the fire once again.

Pip's toasting operations were not attended with success that afternoon, however. Once more she burnt the toast and once more was obliged to scrape it, and doubtless she would have singed it again had not the kettle created a diversion by boiling over with much noise and violence, causing Sheila to rouse herself again with a weary sigh.

"Here, give me the toasting-fork while you go and see to the kettle. I'll finish making the toast. Would you like to stay and have tea with me? I'll get you excused from the dining-hall if you would."

It was Pip's turn to refuse a favour.

"Thanks most awfully, Sheila, but I don't think I will to-day," she said as she measured the tea and poured the water into Sheila's teapot. "It was Rita Deans's birthday yesterday, and she's had a top-hole birthday cake sent her, which we're going to have to-day at our table. So I think I'll go into hall if you don't mind."

Sheila laughed at her fag's candour.

"Oh, all right! I don't want to keep you away from the birthday cake. There's the tea-bell, so you'd better cut. I'll butter that toast." And Pip, fearful of being late, hurried off. It was Miss Kent's day for taking tea, and you never quite knew what she would do if you weren't punctual; she might be content with giving you an order-mark, but, on the other hand, she might take it into her head to deprive you also of cake, should any be going.

Pip was, however, in plenty of time to take her place at table, and was in no danger of losing the birthday cake. Rita was in a super-generous mood, and everybody at the table was helped to a really substantial wedge. But, in spite of the excellence of the cake, Pip felt worried, and presently she confided some of her worry to her two chief friends.

"I don't know what's the matter with Sheila," she said. "She's been awfully queer to-day. I had to keep on saying everything over and over again while I was getting her tea, and even then she didn't seem to take it in."

"Perhaps she was thinking of something else," suggested Susie.

"Sheila doesn't generally think of anything else when you're talking to her. She's been awfully queer all this week, not a bit like she usually is. And to-day I burnt the toast frightfully, and she hardly said a word."

"Perhaps she's worrying about her study being ragged, still," said Aileen. "You spoilt a good many of her things, you know, Pip, and Lucy told me that Lilian Wainwright told her that Meg Harrow told *her* that some notes Sheila had made for a piece of music she was composing for the piano had got lost in the scrum and had never been found."

Pip squirmed uneasily. The ragging of Sheila's study was a subject she did not care to have mentioned. So far, although she had been fagging for Sheila for nearly three weeks—Moira's touch of influenza had proved rather serious, and the little girl was still over at the sanatorium—she had not discovered any way of making amends for that mischievous affair, and the matter was beginning to weigh more and more heavily upon her mind. She was glad when the subject was changed by Rita's birthday cake being sent round again for second helpings, and in the enjoyment of a second

'"Thank you very much, but I didn't do it for any reward,' Pip said firmly" (p. 252)

Drawn by Elizabeth Earnshaw

generous slice, she forgot for the time being the matter of Sheila's queerness.

But it all came back to her again a little later, when, dining-hall tea being over, she scampered along to the prefect's study to clear away Sheila's tea-things and finish her day's duties as fag. The little room was in darkness except for the glow of the fire and the rather uncertain flicker of a candle on the mantelpiece, and Pip switched on the electric light as she went in. But Sheila sat up in her chair with an exclamation of annoyance.

"Don't turn on that light. Put it out again! You can see to clear away by the light of the candle, can't you? I've got a headache, and the electric light hurts my eyes," the prefect said.

Pip switched the light off again hurriedly.

"I'm frightfully sorry. Do let me fetch you some of Lucy's eau-de-Cologne. It's really quite a decent brand," she urged. But when the prefect again refused the offer she did not press it, and she cleared away the tea-things by the dim light of the candle in a very unusual silence. Even when the cups and plates had all been washed and dried and put away in Sheila's cupboard, and Sheila's temporary fag had gone back to the Lower Fourth sitting-room to wait until the bell should ring for preparation, her silent mood continued.

"What's the matter with Pip? She's not said a word since she came in," remarked Rita at last.

"Nor she has!" exclaimed Susie in surprise. "What's the matter, Pip? You're not on silence for anything are you?"

"Oh, no!" Pip hastened to refute this suspicion. "I'm only thinking."

"What about?" asked Rita.

"About the Second Eleven hockey team, I expect," said Susie.

"I'm not, then," said Pip. "At least, I have been thinking about that a little, but it's not that that's making me be quiet."

"What is it, then?" demanded Rita.

"I'm not sure that I ought to tell you," Pip said.

"Why not? We're all friends. If it's a secret, we won't breathe a word to anybody. Surely you know that by this time!" said Rita with reproach.

"Oh, it's not a secret," replied Pip. "At least, if it is a secret, I haven't the remotest idea what it is. If you want to know, I'm worried about Sheila."

"What's the matter with Sheila?" asked Phyllis.

"I don't know, but there's something. And I'm worried," said Pip.

"Pip burnt the toast when she was getting Sheila's tea to-day, and Sheila didn't jaw her for it, so Pip's made up her mind that there's something wrong," said Susie.

"It's not only the toast. It's other things, too. Sheila's not been a bit like herself lately. I wish I knew what was the matter with her."

"She's fed up with you for a fag, Pip, and is simply longing for Moira to come back. Only she doesn't like to tell you so, because you saved her life," teased Rita.

"There *is* something queer about her; Pip's quite right," put in Lucy Wetherall suddenly. "I've noticed it, too. She's sort of far-away and absent-minded all the time. And the other night, at orchestra practice, she was crying."

"She wasn't!" exclaimed the Lower Fourth in startled tones.

"She was, then. She plays the piano, you know, for practices, and she sits with her back to the rest of the orchestra. But I was sitting a bit farther back than usual with my 'cello, and the tears were trickling down her face while we were playing. I saw them myself, though, of course, I didn't let her see me seeing."

"It was the music moved her, then. Miss Clifford's always saying that Sheila has a genius for music. Geniuses are often stirred to their depths when they hear music played," Four B decided.

"It wasn't the music," Lucy persisted. "We weren't playing anything the least little bit likely to make anybody cry. It was that Gavotte thing of somebody's—Popper, I think. It's a lovely sort of jiggly thing that makes you want to laugh and jiggle. Nobody in their senses could possibly cry over that."

The Lower Fourth still looked slightly incredulous. Its members all seemed inclined to discredit Lucy's statement—all, that is, but Pip. Pip knew well enough that it was true. In that brief moment after tea when she had switched on the light in Study Number Seven, Sheila's fag had seen the most unmistakable signs of tears on Sheila's face. She had not meant to have said anything about them though to anyone, unless perhaps she had mentioned it to Susie and Aileen in secret. She knew how she would have hated, if she had been in Sheila's place, to have had the fact that

she had been caught crying blazoned abroad. But after Lucy's revelation, telling what she knew did not seem to matter so much.

"It's true," she said soberly. "At least, I don't know about the orchestra practice, for, of course, I wasn't there. But she was crying in her study just now when I went to clear away her tea-things."

The members of Four B looked at one another in uncomfortable silence. The thought of a prefect being subject to the troubles and trials that assailed lesser people, filled them all with awe. It seemed incredible that the Olympians of the Sixth could ever have cause for tears.

"Perhaps she's lost someone near and dear to her," suggested Lucy, after a long silence—long, that is, for Four B.

"She's not wearing black. She'd be wearing black if it was that," objected Rita.

"Not if it wasn't a relation. You only wear black for relations," Lucy said. "She may have lost her very dearest friend."

"Meg's her dearest friend, and she hasn't lost her," said Pip, whose bosom was burdened with a secret fear that perhaps the ragging of her study and the spoiling of so many of her possessions was the cause of Sheila's grief.

"I didn't mean a girl friend! I meant a man friend—a lover, you know," said Lucy.

"Rot!" said Susie with scorn. "Sheila hasn't got any lovers yet. She's not old enough."

"She is, then," said Lucy. "She's seventeen. Lots of girls get engaged when they're seventeen."

"Not Sheila's sort, though," contended Rita.

"Sheila's not going to be married for ages and ages," Pip remarked. "I heard her and Meg and Christabel talking about it one day when I was getting tea. None of them is going to fall in love yet awhile. Christabel is going to Oxford and is going to be a famous headmistress of some girls' school one day. And Meg's going to have a poultry farm, and Sheila's going to be a musician and have a musical career."

"Not unless she wins that musical training scholarship, though, that she went in for end of last term," said Lucy, airing her superior knowledge. "It all depends upon whether or not she's one of the twelve candidates accepted by the music school. And, anyway, lots of girls say they don't mean to marry. And then they go and fall in love with some man and forget all about their careers."

"*Sheila* wouldn't do that," said Rita. "She's so desperately keen on music. She'd never go and fall in love with anyone if it was going to interfere with her music, I'm sure."

"She mightn't be able to help it," said Lucy. "If the man was frightfully strong and determined, he'd make her fall in love with him, whether she wanted to or not. Like they do in books, you know."

"I don't believe any man could make Sheila fall in love with him unless she wanted to," said Rita.

This being the opinion of the rest of the form, Lucy tried another theory.

"Well, if it isn't an unhappy love affair, perhaps her father or one of her brothers has done something awful and is in danger of being put in prison or something like that. Or, perhaps, Sheila herself has done something that will get her into trouble. Perhaps she cheated in that music examination and is afraid of its being found out."

But this suggestion aroused such a chorus of indignation that Lucy hastily amended it.

"Oh, of course, I don't suppose it's likely," she said quickly. "I was only just trying to think of all the things that might have happened to make Sheila so queer and upset."

"Well, it's nothing of that sort," said Pip, with decision. "Sheila may be a bit of a beast at times, but she'd never do anything the least little bit mean or underhand. Nor would her father, I'm sure. I saw him, you know, the other day, and I'm certain that he's the most honourable sort of man. And Sheila's not got any brothers. She's an only child. Mr. Morris told me so himself. So it can't be them."

"I tell you what it might be," said Phyllis, who had been thinking hard for the last few minutes. "It might be something to do with the musical competition—though not cheating or anything of that sort. Perhaps Sheila's heard the result of the exam., and she's not won one of the scholarships after all."

Pip shook her head.

"No, it isn't that. Christabel asked her this morning if she'd heard yet, and she said, 'No.' She doesn't expect to hear for another week at least, so she told Christabel."

"Well, what can it be, then?" said Rita.

"Can't think!" said Pip. "I wish I could. If only I knew what was the matter, there'd be some chance of my helping her."

"Help her! What on earth could a junior do to help a Sixth Form girl?" said Lucy scornfully.

"Oh, you never know," said Pip. Then she added:

"Tell you what! Let's all try and find out what it is that's making Sheila so unhappy, shall we? We could form ourselves into a secret society or something, and then if we all did our very best to discover what's wrong, very likely we should be able to find out. Will you all do it? Will you?"

"Why are you so desperately keen on Sheila now?" asked Lucy curiously. "It's not so very long ago since you were calling her all the names under the sun. Why have you changed so?"

"Well, you see," Pip explained, "you can't help changing in your feelings a bit towards a person when you've saved her life. Besides, Sheila's changed towards me. She used to be always snubbing and scolding me, but now she's really awfully decent most of the time. And that isn't all, either. I've got a special reason of my own for wanting to do something for Sheila. I can't tell you what it is, but I'd be most awfully obliged if you'd all help me."

"Of course we'll help you if you want us to," said Rita. And the rest of the Lower Fourth, the members of which were rather attracted by the idea of forming themselves into a secret society to help Pip in her efforts to discover what was wrong with her fag-mistress, readily agreed to give their assistance.

"Though I haven't the least idea what we can do," Phyllis said.

"Nor have I just this minute," Pip owned. "But we're sure to think of something if we all put our minds to it. Shall we have a meeting now? Oh, bother! There's the bell for prep. Oh, well, never mind! We'll hold our first meeting in here to-night after supper, and draw up the rules and decide how we'd better begin."

CHAPTER XII

The S.O.S.

"THE first thing to do when you have a secret society is to think of a name for it," said Lucy Wetherall.

It was after supper that same evening. The budding secret society had gathered for its initial meeting in the Lower Fourth sitting-room, and its members found themselves confronted at once with a difficulty. Nobody could think of a satisfactory name for it.

"We could get ahead with discussing what we're going to do, and think of a name afterwards," urged Pip. Pip was anxious to get to business, which, so far as she was concerned, was simply to find out what was troubling Sheila, in the hope that she might be able to help the prefect and so make atonement for that still unconfessed sin. "We've all tried and we can none of us think of a really decent name now. But I dare say we'll think of something presently, and, anyway, the name doesn't really matter. It's finding out what's wrong with Sheila that's the important thing."

But Four B would not agree as to that. Lucy, indeed, flatly refused to proceed without a name, and at last Pip, in despair, was driven to inventing a title.

"Well, then, how would 'The Society for Helping Sheila' do?" she asked. "We could call ourselves for short the 'S.H.S.'"

"I don't call that very good." This from Lucy. "We might as well call ourselves the S.O.S. at once and have done with it!"

"Well, why not?" cried Pip, seized with sudden inspiration. "*Let's* call ourselves the S.O.S.! The Saviours of Sheila. I think that would do toppingly, and nobody would ever guess what it stood for."

"H'm, it wouldn't be bad," Rita said critically. "The only thing is we don't want our secret society to come to an end when we've finished with Sheila. We want it to go on for ever and ever—at any rate, for a term or two. The S.O.S. wouldn't do for a name for it when we'd finished saving Sheila."

"Yes, it would," said Pip. "It could be the Society of Secrets then. I think it would be rather a top-hole name for a secret society."

"Oh, yes! That will do O.K.!" chorused Four B. And the society having thus been satisfactorily christened, the members of it proceeded to discuss ways and means of finding out Sheila's particular secret.

That proved to be a far more difficult undertaking. Lucy's idea that Pip should try and discover it for herself by reading the letters in Sheila's desk one day when

she was dusting, met with such an outburst of horrified indignation, that the author of the scheme hastily abandoned it and protested that she was only joking. The obvious course, suggested by Rita, that someone should tackle Sheila and ask her outright what was the matter, fell through, because no one—not even Pip—could be found to undertake the tackling.

"Sheila can be so beastly squashing when she likes," the temporary fag objected ruefully.

And Susie's amendment that the Form should waylay Meg Harrow some time when she was not with Sheila and pump her as to the reason for her friend's depression, although duly carried out, met with no success at all, Meg proving almost as squashing as Sheila herself, when questioned, ever so tactfully, upon the subject.

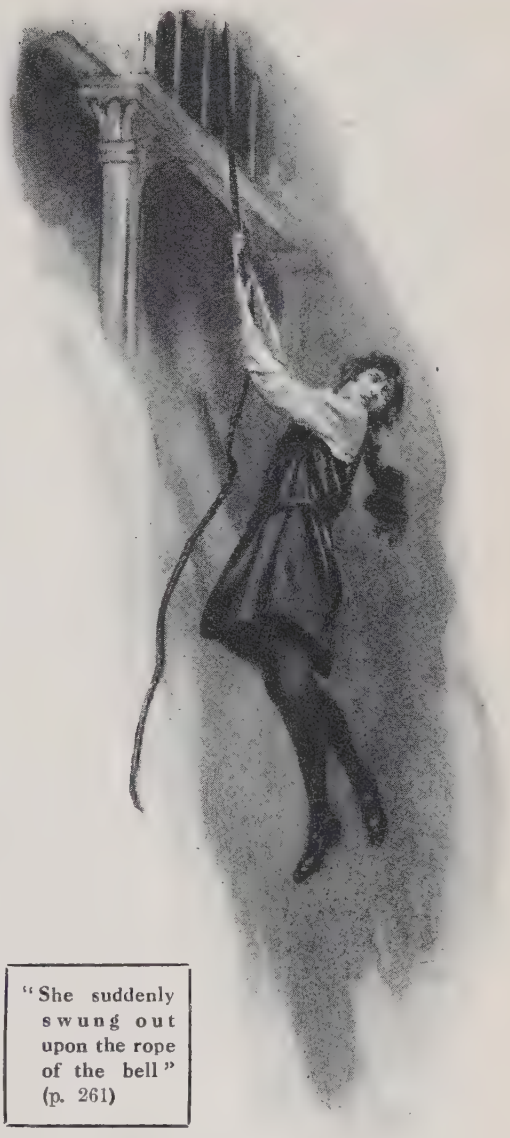
"What the dickens have Sheila's affairs to do with you?" the Fifth Form girl had demanded indignantly. "If she's worried about anything at all, I should think it was about the awful dormitory she's got to look after! If you kids from Four B would mind your own business a bit instead of nosing about after other people's, Sheila mightn't have quite so much to worry her. The cheek of you daring to ask me such a thing!"

And she had stumped away in wrath, leaving Four B to digest its snubbing as best it could.

When the S.O.S. met again, some days later, the results of all its endeavours were found to be absolutely nil. Not a single clue to Sheila's depression had been found. Nor was the outlook for the future discovery of it very hopeful, since nobody could think of any plan for the further tracking of the mysterious secret.

"You're quite right, though, Pip. There is something the matter with her," Rita conceded. "She's not a bit like her usual self. We've all noticed it now that we've really come to study her. She's evidently got something preying most awfully on her mind."

"Yes, and I believe Meg and Christabel know what it is, too," said Lucy." Phyllis and I saw them talking to Sheila the other day when we were out in the quad. We walked round past them to see if we could hear anything they were saying—not eavesdropping, you know, only just anything *anybody* might hear if they were walking past. And we heard Christabel say: 'Perhaps when it comes to the point things will turn out better than you think.' And Meg said: 'Yes, cheer up, old thing! It's no good trying to cross stiles until you come to them.' Didn't they, Phyl?"



"She suddenly swung out upon the rope of the bell" (p. 261)

"Yes," nodded Phyllis. "And Sheila was beginning to say something back when she caught sight of us, and they all stopped talking and waited for us to go by. So we had to walk on, or they might have thought we were trying to spy on them, you know."

"I'm afraid we'll have to drop the saving of Sheila part and think out something else for the society to do," Rita said.

"It's a pity that Moira Hill's over at the San," said Susie reflectively. "If only she were here, she might be able to help. Even if she couldn't tell us right away what was wrong, she's been Sheila's fag for so long that she'd very likely be able to put us on the right track for finding out."

"You'll have to wait till Moira's back from the San, Pip," remarked Rita.

"Then she'll have to wait till next term, and maybe longer," Lucy put in. "Moira's not coming back from the San. She's had 'flu so badly that she's not to do any more lessons this term. Her people are coming to fetch her to-morrow morning, and she's going away to the sea for a couple of months."

"She isn't! Is she really? How do you know? Who told you?" questioned Four B eagerly.

"Matron. At least, she didn't exactly tell me, but I put two and two together and found out. Moira's cubie's next to mine in the dorm, you know, and when I went up to get a clean hankie just before prep this evening, because I'd lost my other one, matron was there packing up Moira's things. I asked her if Moira was going away, and she told me to go along and mind my own business. But later on I was in matron's office, seeing about my blouse which was lost in the wash, and Miss Kent came in and said: 'What time are Moira Hill's people coming for her to-morrow?' And matron said: 'The car's to be here at ten o'clock,' before she remembered about me. And then when she saw I'd heard, she laughed and told me about the seaside part."

"Lucky kid, Moira! Wish I could get 'flu and be taken away to the sea!" sighed Phyllis enviously.

"Well!" said Pip suddenly. "If Moira's going away to-morrow, we've got to see her to-night. I wonder whether matron would let one or two of us go across to the San?"

"Of course she won't! You know the rules about not going to the San," exclaimed Susie.

"But if Moira's going away for such a long while perhaps matron would let us break the rules, just for once," Pip argued.

"She won't, then," said Lucy. "I begged her to let me go and say good-bye to Moira, because she was almost my special friend, you know. She always went for a walk with me on Wednesdays, and we sat by each other for tea. But matron wouldn't. She was perfectly horrid about it. Wouldn't even let me write a note for her to take. She said Sister Isabel didn't want Moira to know that she was going until to-morrow, because of her getting excited and her temperature going up if they told her to-night. And when I said, give it to her in the morning, then, before she starts, matron said 'No, she wouldn't.' She said that Moira would have quite enough excitement in the morning without being bothered by any silly notes."

"Then if she wouldn't let Lucy go and see her, she's sure not to let you go, Pip, at this hour of the night," said Rita.

"And she's not likely to let you write a note, either. You know what matron's like when she gets into that sort of a mood," Phyllis added.

Pip nodded her head.

"Rather! I bet I do just know! But, all the same, matron or no matron, I must see Moira before she goes. If matron won't let me go and talk to her properly, I must get to her some other way, that's all."

"How can you get to her any other way?" Susie asked.

Pip considered a moment, then she looked up with an impish expression on her face, which her friends in Lower Fourth knew by experience meant that some particularly naughty bit of mischief had just hatched itself in her fertile brain.

"Get through the window and slip down to the San, now, in the dark, and then climb up by the veranda. Moira's sure to be in the convalescing ward, and the windows are certain to be open. And there won't be anybody there just now, for Sister Isabel and nurse will be having their supper if they're not in the sick ward. There'll only be Moira and some of the other convalescents"

"It will mean the dickens of a bust-up if you're caught," said Rita doubtfully.

"I shan't get caught," said Pip. "It's as dark as dark out of doors to-night. Nobody will be able to see us, and you know how easy it is to climb up to the convalescent ward now that that balcony place has been made. What's the time? Quarter past eight? Then there'll be loads of time before prayers. I'm going now." And she darted across to the window of the sitting-room and opened it wide.

"I'm coming with you," said Susie.

"So am I," said Rita.

"And I," cried Phyllis. "It will be no end of a lark."

"We can't all go," said Pip, pausing in the act of putting a leg over the window-sill. "It won't do for everyone in Four B to be absent, just in case somebody comes along."

In the end it was arranged that Pip, Susie, Aileen and Rita should venture forth, while the other members of the Form stayed behind to give the sitting-room a natural look in case any unexpected visitors should come in. At the last moment and after much hesitation, Lucy joined the party, too. Not that the adventure was any more to her liking than it was to Aileen's. But she had boasted that Moira was her chum, and Four B's openly expressed astonishment that she was not one of the volunteers to visit her afflicted friend, drove her into going at last. So she followed Pip and her followers out of the window with a reluctance that was only consoled by the reflection that there was really very little risk of being caught. Not even for the sake of "almost her special" friend would Lucy willingly have imperilled her own skin!

There was, however, very little risk of meeting anybody at this hour of the night. The college staff would still be at dinner; Sister Isabel and Nurse Agnes, the two trained nurses in charge of the Sanatorium, would either be at theirs also in the little sitting-room in the San, or else would be on duty in the sick ward, where the "really ill" patients were. Convalescents all had to be in bed by eight o'clock, no matter how advanced the convalescence might be, and the ward where they slept was on the first floor far removed from any of the sick wards.

The Sanatorium was built at some little distance from the school, and was surrounded by a high brick wall. That, however, offered few difficulties to Pip and Susie and Rita, all of whom mounted to the top with ease and hauled the less agile Aileen and Lucy up after them. Once on the top of the wall the rest was easy. All that the adventurers had to do was to drop on to the smooth turf of a small enclosed lawn below them, and steal softly over the grass until they came beneath the balconied windows of the convalescent ward.

Only a dim light was burning in the ward, and several of its windows were open to the night air—the visitors observed with satisfaction.

"This is the easiest pillar to swarm up," whispered Pip, and she grasped one of the upright iron pillars which supported the balcony, and began to climb up it.

It was quite easy. The pillar was twisted and ornamented with spikes and grooves, and it afforded plenty of hold for hand and foot. Pip reached the balcony with speed and dropped lightly over the rails surrounding it. Susie and Rita followed, and then Lucy essayed the climb. Pip leant over to help her as she neared the top.

"Take care where you put your hand," she remarked as she heard, rather than watched, Lucy's labouring progress. "There's something rather slimy just at the top of the pillar. I think it's a slug."

"A slug! Oh, where?" shrieked Lucy.

"Hush, you silly! Don't make such a row. It can't hurt you, and, anyhow, I'm not sure about it. Do buck up and come along," Pip urged in an impatient whisper.

"Do you get slugs this time of the year?" said Rita doubtfully. "I don't believe you do. Come on, Lucy. If there's a slug there at all, it's probably a dead one. And, anyway, as Pip says, it can't possibly hurt you."

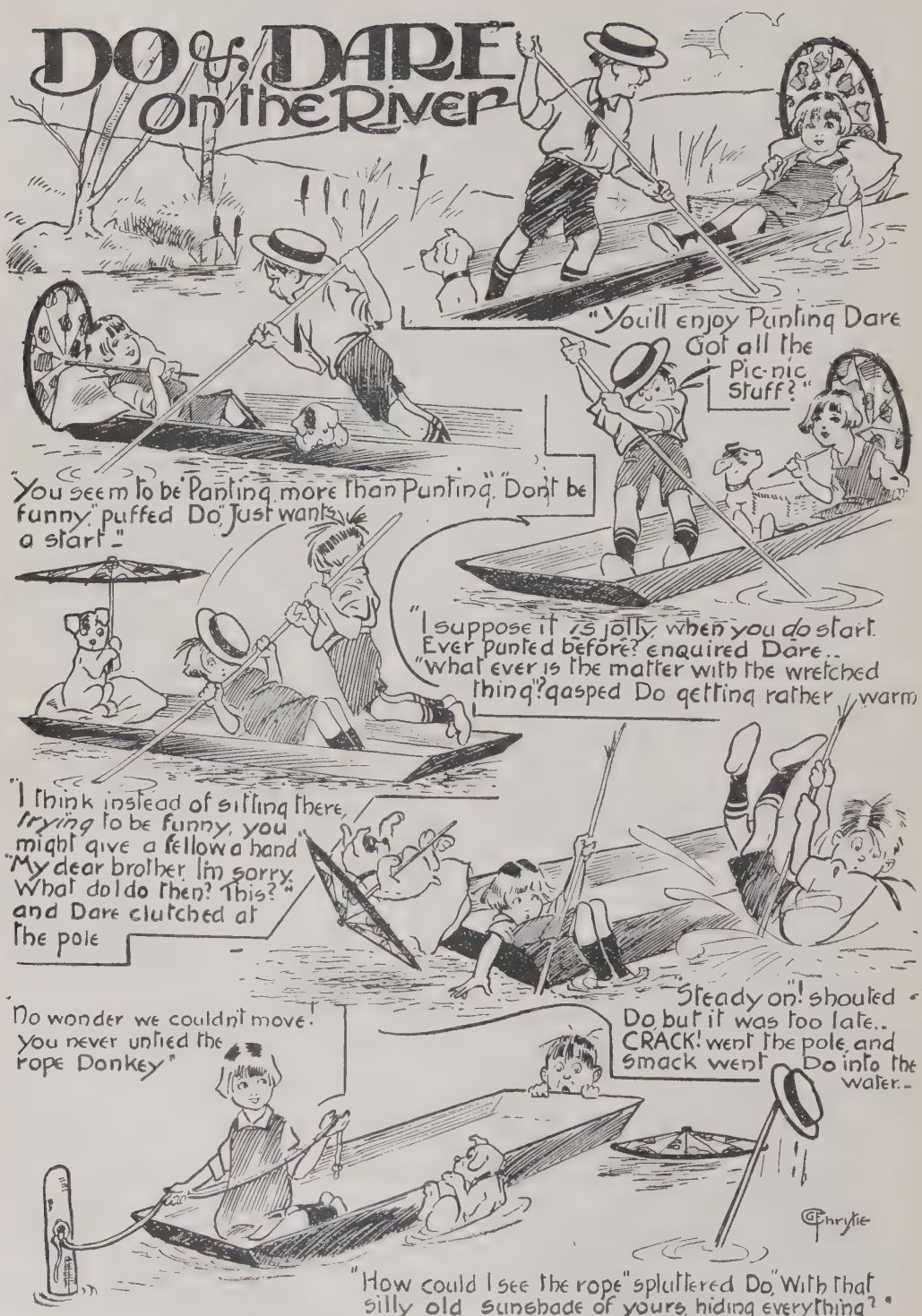
But Lucy was not so sure. She preferred not to risk it. She reached out and tried to grasp the rail farther away from the spot where the others had landed—tried and failed, and made a desperate clutch at something hanging from the balcony a couple of feet from the pillar—something which seemed to promise a certain grip.

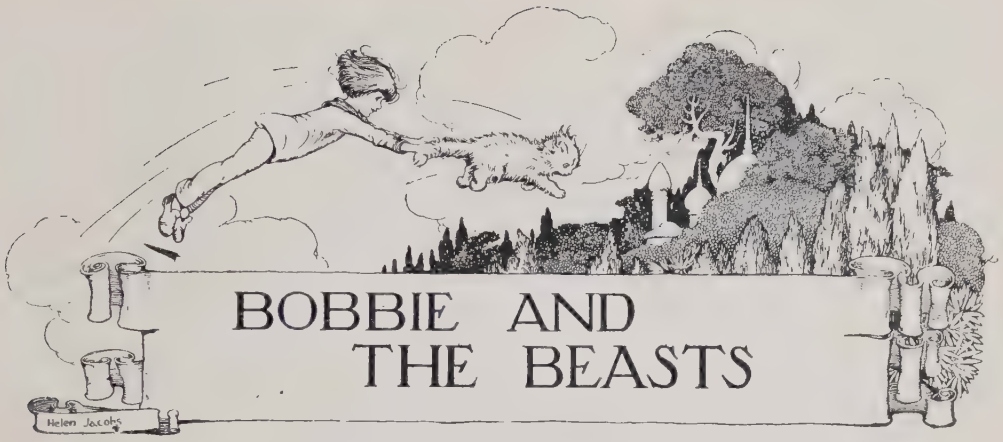
It fulfilled its promise, certainly, since it proved to be a rope of stout and strong texture, depending firmly from the roof of the Sanatorium; but the result of gripping it proved decidedly unexpected. A loud and sonorous note clanged out upon the night, and Pip gave a little suppressed shriek of horror.

"Look out! You've got hold of the fire-bell rope. Let go, you silly ass!"

Lucy obeyed; but, unfortunately, in the excitement of the moment she let go of wrong thing. Loosing her grasp of the pillar, she suddenly swung out upon the rope of the bell. The bell, naturally, clanged again, and Lucy, losing her head entirely, slid down the rope in jerks, ringing the alarm violently the while she slithered to the ground.

(To be continued)


DO & DARE
on the River
"You'll enjoy Punting Dare Got all the Pic-nic stuff?"
"You seem to be Panting more than Punting". "Don't be funny" puffed Do "Just wants a start."
"I suppose it is jolly when you do start. Ever punted before? enquired Dare.. "what ever is the matter with the wretched thing?" gasped Do getting rather warm
"I think instead of sitting there, trying to be funny, you might give a fellow a hand" "My dear brother, I'm sorry. What do I do then? This?" and Dare clutched at the pole
"Steady on!" shouted Do but it was too late.. CRACK! went the pole, and smack went Do into the water.
"No wonder we couldn't move! you never untied the rope Donkey"
"How could I see the rope" spluttered Do "With that silly old sunshade of yours, hiding everything?"
G Chrystie



BOBBIE AND THE BEASTS

By Violet M. Methley

NO. 4.—BOBBIE AND THE BIRDS

BOBBIE had mumps, and, unless you have had them yourself, you can't imagine what horrid things they are.

They make you *look* funny, although you don't *feel* funny at all, and you can't eat comfortably, and you're shut up in one room so that other people shouldn't catch them.

"And nobody's *really* sorry," Bobbie said sulkily. "They just laugh and say: 'Only mumps!' I wish I'd got small-pox, or—or hydrophobia, or—or the great plague of London!"

"Oh, Master Bobbie!" nurse said in a shocked voice. "How you do talk! And all those lovely grapes, too!"

But even grapes are not much comfort when you're mumpish. Bobbie's face was all swollen, and he had a muffler round it, and felt horribly miserable. When he had had his fish and milky pudding for lunch, and nurse had gone away, there wasn't much to do, except look at the picture of the Avenue, and wish and *wish* that he could get back to Fairy-Beast-Land.

Of course he couldn't. There weren't any beasts in the room to take him there. Even Kate, the kitten, was not allowed to come in, for fear of mumps, and although once Bobbie thought he heard a mouse, he never saw it to speak to.

"Oh dear! Mumps are very boring!" poor Bobbie said, as he stood by the window and breathed on it and drew patterns with his fingers in the breathe. But that gets boring, too, after a little while.

A tree grew close to the window, and a sparrow was sitting on one of the branches, with a long piece of straw in its beak.

"I s'pose it's making a nest," Bobbie thought. "That must be rather jolly. I wonder if I could make one with the moss and stuff that came with the primroses."

It was something to do, anyhow, and Bobbie pulled some long trails from the ivy that grew round the window, and twisted them together. And then he filled in the cracks with moss, and lined the nest with some of the cotton-wool that was going to be used to keep his face warm, and it was really quite interesting.

"There! It *does* LOOK like a real one!" Bobbie said at last, and, to his great surprise, a little shrill voice answered him, a voice with a cockney accent.

"Yus, it's a good nest, it reely is!

I wouldn't 'ave believed that you could mike it as well as that."

Bobbie looked up, and there, on the window-sill, a sparrow was perched, looking into the room very perkily, with his head on one side.

"Oh!" Bobbie gasped, and the sparrow hopped right in and examined the nest very carefully.

"Good sound stuff!" he said. "Yus, you'd mike a builder, you would, wiv practice. On'y you did it too fast. Our Union doesn't allow a 'ouse a dye, so you mustn't let them 'ear of it. Well, is there anywhere as you'd like ter go? Because I'm tiking my lunch hour off, and I can spare a few secs."

"Oh, could you take me to Fairy-Beast-Land?" Bobbie asked eagerly. "Perhaps the birds could tell me where to find Elephant's Hair."

"Helephant's 'Air? Never 'eard of it!" the Sparrow said. "But then I'm a Londoner, and I ain't never been much furver than Kensington Gardens. I've a cousin 'oo lives near the Zoo, though, 'e might be ible to tell yer."

"I've been to the Zoo myself," Bobbie said sadly, "and it wasn't any use."

"'Ave yer now!" the Sparrow said. "Well, come on then! Catch 'old of my tile, and 'op when I do, and we'll be in them trees there before yer can sye 'Jack Robinson!'"

"Oh, but what about mumps?" Bobbie asked. "Won't they catch them in Fairy-Beast-Land?"

"Not they!" the Sparrow said scornfully. "Come on!"

So the Sparrow hopped and Bobbie hopped, and next minute they were sitting on a bough in one of the avenue trees, and the sun was shining and the blue sky showing between the leaves.

It *was* nice to be there again! Bobbie laughed and clapped his hands and there were the twitterings and flutterings of birds all round. The Sparrow sharpened his beak on a twig.

"Well, I must be getting along back," he said. "But I'll come and fetch yer later on. So, cheerio!"

He flew off, and Bobbie felt rather lonely amongst all the strange birds. And then someone hopped on to the bough where he sat, and looked at him in a very friendly way, with a beady black eye.

"Oh, Cock Robin!" Bobbie cried, and the little bird twinkled his tail.

"Yes, that's me!" he said. "Nobody *really* killed me, you know; it was just a silly story invented by the sparrows. We've never been really friendly, you know—they're jealous of my red waistcoat."

"Was it you who looked after the Babes in the Wood?" Bobbie asked, and the Robin puffed out his scarlet waistcoat rather proudly.

"I and my brothers and sisters. It was quite hard work to bring enough leaves to cover them, but we always like to be helpful," he said.

"Then perhaps you'd help me to get some Elephant's Hairs," Bobbie said. But Cock Robin shook his head.

"I'm afraid I've never had anything to do with elephants," he said. "But there's Robinson Crusoe's parrot, he's been to foreign countries, if you can only make him wake up and talk. Or there's the Blue Bird, but he's *very* difficult to find. We'll try, anyway, but you'd better climb down to the ground. You'd find it difficult to hop from twig to twig."

So Bobbie climbed down and walked along the avenue with Cock Robin beside him. Just then the most beautiful whistling began, and Bobbie saw that it was a lovely blackbird with a yellow bill, and then he saw another—and another.

"Why, there are dozens of blackbirds!" he cried, and began to count them, until he came to twenty-four, and then he knew!

"Oh, are they really the Four-and-twenty blackbirds?" he asked Cock Robin. "The ones who were baked in a pie?"

"That's another silly story," Cock Robin said rather crossly. "They were *in* the pie, but they certainly weren't *baked* in it. Otherwise—well, they *would* have been baked!"

"What about pecking off the maid's nose?" Bobbie asked.

"Hush!" Cock Robin held up one claw. "That certainly *did* happen, but we've never discovered which of them did it. Each of the twenty-four says it was one of the others, you see."

Presently they came to a pool, and floating on the pool were seven of the loveliest white swans you ever saw. Of course Bobbie knew that they must be *the* Seven Swans—the ones who were really enchanted princes, and had shirts made of nettles; and he stood on the edge of the pool and wondered how you spoke to swans who were really princes.

"Your—your Majesties——" he began. "Your—your Royal Highnesses, would you—could you—do you——"

But the swans took no notice, and just at that moment Bobbie saw another bird standing near him on the bank—a greyish clumsy-looking bird, about the size of a large duck, and really very ugly. And, suddenly, Bobbie knew who it was.

"Oh, dear Ugly Duckling, I do believe it's you!" he cried. "Only it's frightfully rude of me to call you that."

"It doesn't matter a bit," the Ugly Duckling said. "Because, you see, I know that some day I shall turn into a swan."

"Then p'r'aps, if you're their relation, you'd ask them if they know where I can get some Elephant's Hairs?" Bobbie asked timidly. "'Cause I feel *rather* shy of them."

So the Ugly Duckling, who was always a perfect darling, spoke to the Seven Swans, and they came sailing up to the bank, and said in deep, sad voices:

"No, we cannot tell you. We do not know."

"So that's that!" Cock Robin remarked perkily. "Come on."

Bobbie was just going to come on, when a bird who was running down the road very fast nearly knocked him over. She was a big, black bird, with a white waistcoat and no wings to speak of, and she was waving her flippers and looking very worried.

"Hullo, Squeak!" Cock Robin said. "What's the matter?"

"It's Wilfrid; I can't find my poor, darling little Wilfrid!" Squeak cried. "I must go and look for him!"

The Penguin ran off, in her comical way, before Bobbie had time to tell her how he had seen Wilfrid in the warren, and he forgot all about her next minute, when he saw a very strange creature coming towards them.

"Is it a bird?" he asked Cock Robin. "It looks more like a—a——"

"I know what you're going to say, and you'd better not," the Robin interrupted. "He's the Gryphon and he hates to be thought like a dragon. He calls himself a bird, and we all humour him, because he's quite gentle and harmless, poor fellow."

Of course Bobbie remembered the Gryphon, and he asked his question about the Elephant's Hair. But the Gryphon couldn't tell him anything, although he scratched his forehead with one claw and looked very grave and thoughtful.

"If it had been *Jugged* Hare," he said. "Or *Mo* Hair——"

"What's that?" Bobbie asked.

"The hair of the Mo," the Gryphon answered solemnly. "A mythical creature who never existed."

"Then how could it——" Bobbie began, but the Gryphon interrupted.

"It didn't—that's just where you make a mistake," he said, and stalked away, leaving Bobbie very discouraged.

"Never mind,—we'll go and find the old Parrot," Cock Robin said cheerfully. "*If* he isn't

asleep, and *if* we can make him talk, well, then, he *will* talk ! "

They found the Parrot sitting in a sunny corner fast asleep, and he wouldn't wake up, although Cock Robin poked him and twittered in his ear. He just opened one grey scaly eyelid, and then shut it again, and he wouldn't say one single word.

" You see, he's about three hundred years old," Cock Robin said. " I suppose we can't expect him to be very lively. We must try to find the Blue Bird, although I'm afraid *that's* not very hopeful. It's so difficult to get hold of him."

So they searched and searched,—and sometimes Bobbie thought he saw the Blue Bird, but it always turned out to be just a pigeon or some other bird. At last they came to a little orchard where pink almond grew, and white pear, and pink-and-white apple-blossom, and cherry trees just like snow.

And suddenly Bobbie saw something *so* blue that he knew it couldn't be any ordinary bird, and he ran after it as fast as he could. But it fluttered on, and it always seemed to be just a few trees away, and he never got close enough to speak to it.

Then, just as he really *did* seem to be catching up, he heard Cock Robin twittering in a frightened sort of way.

" The Roc ! The Roc ! " he cried, and Bobbie looked up and saw that what he had thought was a dark cloud was really a huge, enormous bird, whose wings stretched right across the sky.

" The Roc ! The Roc ! " all the birds twittered, and Bobbie saw that they were hiding under trees and bushes. So he did the same. He crept into a clump of hawthorn bushes, and lay there, quite snug and comfortable, whilst the Roc swooped lower and lower, its great wings seeming to cover all the sky.

Then, presently, Bobbie saw that the sun was shining again, and the sky blue, so he crept out, and found that the great bird had flown away, and the Robin was calling to him.

" Come out ! It's all right ! Don't you hear the blackbirds whistling the ' All Clear ' ? It's a bother when the Roc turns up like that, not that I'm afraid of him myself."

" Is he likely to come back ? " Bobbie asked.

" Well, one never knows," Cock Robin said cautiously. " I think perhaps you'd better go home, if we can find the Sparrow."

They found him on the very last tree of the avenue, waiting.

" I've just come along to tike you back," he told Bobbie. " And I've been going over that there nest of yours. It on'y wants a bit o' decorating and over'auling, and it' ud do me fine. So if yer don't mind, I'll tike it over meself. Come on. 'Op it ! "

So Bobbie hopped, and there he was, back in the night nursery, sitting in the big chair by the window, with nurse just coming in with the tea-tray and saying :

" Why, Master Bobbie, you've been so good and quiet, you must have been asleep."

" I haven't," Bobbie said indignantly. "I've been making a nest and then——"

He stopped, because it wasn't any use to tell nurse about Fairy-Beast-Land ever. Besides, he was looking for the nest, and the nest had gone !

Of course, it proved that it had all happened, and the Sparrow had taken it away.

So that was that !

The Voyage of the *Wee Craw*

By

Evelyn Smith

1

"TRESPASSERS will be prosecuted! Trespassers will be prosecuted! Only those who have boats may come here! Back, the rest! Back, the rest!"

The big, fair boy with pink cheeks and his sister, who was as like him as a girl could be, waded up and down near the shore of the lovely little pine-encircled bay to the south of the loch, the best place for play that could be imagined, for it had everything—water, white sand, rocks, pebbles, moss, trees, ferns, flowers, and fruit—blaeberries and brambles, and tiny wild raspberries. One or two of their friends followed them; one or two, doubtful as to their methods, lingered on the beach, where a small fleet of toy yachts and motor-boats was drawn up.

"'I've caught a fish!' he cried. 'A twenty-pounder!'"

Drawn by John Campbell

The little girl with the big hat and long sun-burned legs looked up at them wonderingly. She had never dreamed that the place where she and Timmy, who was only three, played, might be invaded in this fashion, and she really did not know what to do.

"Only those who have boats may come here," repeated one of the tyrants.

"S'e's speakin' to you, Jill," said Timmy, staring at the new-comers with much disapproval.

Jill took his hand.

"Who says so?" she asked in a shaky voice, though she tried to speak very haughtily.

"I say so!" said the big boy. "I, Thomas Blaine, of Suddersby, Buckinghamshire, England, Europe, the World. And my sister Dora, of the same address, says so too. Don't you, Dorrie?"

"I do!" said the girl. "And so do Margaret, and Guy, and Lesley. So do Sheila and Jeanie. Don't you?" She called to the two doubtful combatants by the boat.

"Yes," returned one of them, but not with much conviction.

"There, you see!" said Thomas Blaine.

"And quit," said Dora.

"But Timmy has a boat," said Jill, hoping that, if noticed, this possession might put things right. And she gently jerked forward a small twopenny craft by the piece of cotton which served Timmy as a tow-rope with which to haul it about the

"'I shall call that boat the *Wee Craw,*' said Jill"

Drawn by John Campbell

bay. Although the inside of it was painted scarlet, and its thwarts were staring white, it was easy to overlook it, and Thomas blinked his eyes as if he could not quite see it.

"*That?* That a boat?" he inquired with sarcasm.

"Yes. It's quite a good boat, though it's small," said Jill. "These sixpenny and shilling ones with sails are no good, really, they're so tippetty."

"*That* can't count as a boat," decided Dora. "So run away with baby, there's a good girl. We want to play here. We want to have races, and this is the course. We can't have you paddling about in the way all the time."

Thomas seized the cotton and held Timmy's twopenny boat aloft.

"I've caught a fish!" he cried. "I've caught a salmon! A twenty-pounder!"

For a minute Timmy merely looked worried; then the nerve-strain proved too much for him, and he broke into a loud howl.

"Oh, don't cry!" said Jill, as if amazed, though the demeanour of the new-comers was so perplexing that she herself felt a little like doing it. "Don't cry, Timmy! The boy'll give it you back again. He's only playing with it."

"Give the kid his boat, Tom," said the boy called Guy.

"I don't want his boat!" said Tom with a big laugh, though he was a bit embarrassed by the sight and sound of Timmy's alarm. "Here's his boat. Here's his Dreadnought." And he flung it into the water, a little farther out than he intended. The west wind caught it, and it bobbed merrily off, out of Jill's reach and out of her depth. Timmy's howl became a roar of anguish. Jill seized his hand.

"You're a pig to have thrown away his boat!" she said, her anger flushing her cheeks scarlet under her sun-burn.

Jill led Timmy away. She didn't want to stay in the place any longer, but the next beach, behind a jut of black rock, was not nearly such a good one for play. There were stones instead of hard white sand, and the water was shallow for only a few inches out, and then suddenly got too deep for Timmy to paddle in it. He was thoroughly upset by the loss of his boat, and, try as she would, Jill could find no way of comforting him.

"Has the wee laddie lost his boat?" suddenly said a kind, rough voice, and,

looking up from her attempt to make a gondola with the peel of a banana, Jill saw Angus, the big boy from the cottage at the back of the one her mother had taken for the summer holidays. Angus was, as usual, in an old black dinghy, in which he took out visitors who came to the loch for the fishing. While rowing about waiting for an old gentleman who was always late, he had seen the expulsion of Jill and Timmy from the bay where they usually played, and, with a few strokes, he had pulled up to where the lost boat tossed about by itself as confidently as if it were a model yacht properly trimmed, nipped it up between his finger and thumb, and put it in his pocket. He now drew it out and handed it to the thankful Jill.

"Oh, how good of you!" she exclaimed. "Oh, I'm so glad you've got it."

"Would you care for a wee boat yourself?" inquired Angus.

"I'd love it!" said Jill.

Seeing his client on the shore, Angus rowed off, deliberately, as he did everything. Jill, thankful that Timmy was restored to serenity, thought no more of his question. But that evening he called her into the little shed at the back of his cottage and showed her a rough keel he was shaping out of pinewood.

"It's yon boat I promised you," he said.

II

For a few nights Angus worked steadily at the little boat, and all the time he worked he sang the old Scotch rhyme to its funny little tune:

"Three wee craws sat upon the wa'—
Sat upon the wa'—
Sat upon the wa'—
One wee craw it couldna flee at a'
Couldna flee at a'
Couldna flee at a'."

And so on.

"I shall call that boat the *Wee Craw*," said Jill.

"Then I'll need to put a black wing on her," said Angus.

The progress of the *Wee Craw* was a comfort in days which were not very happy ones. Jill knew all about the new-comers now; Tom and Dora Blaine, Guy Lester and his sisters, Sheila and Jeanie Cameron, all staying at the little hotel at the foot of the loch. They did not worry her; Sheila and Jeanie looked at her as if they would like to smile, but she felt too much outraged by what she and Timmy had suffered on the first morning of their arrival to want to respond to this small sign of friendliness.

Angus came down to the shore to launch the *Wee Craw*, and to show Jill how to trim her sails to the wind. "I'm glad I've got her finished," he said, "for you'll be able to sail her in the regatta on Saturday."

"Regatta!"

"Ay. There's a race in the interval, just for wee boats like this. Then you'll ken what like she is—if she's any good at all."

"Oh, but I know already, Angus! She's a perfectly darling little boat. I couldn't have one I liked so much, not if I chose it from the biggest shop in London."

III

The loch regatta was a pleasant informal affair, not so badly crowded that it was impossible to see what was going on. There were rowing and motor-boat races, races for sailing canoes and little yachts. They were all pretty to watch, but Jill could not give her mind to the enjoyment of them, so eager was she for what was to her and to all the children the big event of the afternoon—the toy-boat race.

A shrill whistle sounded as a sign for the children to get their toy craft ready. Everyone laughed at the line of pretty little boats; they were of so varied a character. Tom proudly prepared to start his wonderful model, and just as the pistol fired Timmy staggered forward and flung his twopenny liner, as Jill called it, into the water. It bobbed gaily but erratically after the others, and Timmy laughed loudly with pride.

"My boat's goin' to win!" he shouted. "My boatie's goin' to win the big race."

The long, grey shape of the *Peerless*, Tom's model, shot ahead, fussing through the waves like a real little motor-launch. The boats that were mere mechanical toys clicked away gallantly. The pretty white-winged yachts rode the first ripple, heeled over, and capsized. "*O-h-h-h!*" said their owners in voices of bitter disappointment. "But they always do that." Guy's little smack made a good start. And the *Wee Craw*—she paused, lay to the wind as if asking it to fill her sails and to do its best

for her, rose a little, steadied herself, and flew off like the bird she was, her black wing stretched, her balance perfect.

At the north of the bay the wind caught the toy boats. What were big waves for their little keels met them. The *Wee Craw* rode gallantly across them as if she knew and loved them. The *Peerless* dashed bravely into them. One of them swept over her—the tick of her little engine stopped. She could go, but she was not built for weather. Aimlessly she rocked on, daunted and put out of action by what gave the *Wee Craw* power and swiftness. There were roars of applause as the black wing swept across the line. Jill, hands still clasped, panted with excitement and delight. Eagerly she looked round to see how Angus felt about it.

"Oh, Angus, isn't it *lovely?*"

"It's a' richt. She'll dae. Away roun' with the boat-hook and fetch her in, lassie, or she'll be gone."

But it was too late. The wind had caught the *Wee Craw*, and the *Wee Craw* the wind. She was away with it, as swift and confident as if she had an elf aboard to sail her, out into the open loch, her black wing a little smudge on the blue.

"Oh, Angus, will she be lost? Can't we follow her? Can't we get her? It'll be terrible if she capsizes, or if anything happens to her."

"She'll no capsize before she gets into the cross winds. I'll no say what will be happening tae her then."

"But can't we catch her?"

"Och, ay, we'll overtake her."

There was some delay. Angus couldn't find his own dinghy, and, by the time a sympathetic house-boater had lent him one, and Jill had asked her mother if she might go out on the loch, the *Wee Craw* was out of sight. But Angus said that he knew where she would be, and he seemed so wise and so confident that she believed him.

He pulled across the loch to the shore of a long island, round a point, into a deeply cleft bay. Then he lent on his oars and stared, surprised out of his usual calm.

"Yon's my boat!" he exclaimed.

Jill twisted round to see. There was Angus's boat, beached broadside on. There was the *Wee Craw*, as if steered by the same invisible elfin hand, making straight for it. And there were two dismally waving figures—the figures of Dora Blaine and of the younger Cameron girl.

"The daft lassies—they'll have taken that boat oot and no been able to get back," he said. "They've a guid cheek, too," he added as an afterthought.

Whatever Dora might have had as a rule, she was in a very gentle and subdued mood when Angus pulled up on the sand. Evidently she had thought it would be a great plan to see the regatta from a boat, had found Angus's with oars and rowlocks in it, and had persuaded Sheila Cameron to go with her, just a little way. They had lost an oar, and the wind had seized them as it seized the *Wee Craw*, and they had drifted on to this island shore. "Just think! we might have died if you hadn't come and rescued us!" said Dora dramatically.

"Och, ye'd not have done that," said Angus. "It's no your sort that dees. Ye just live to be a plague to the peace o' your neighbours"

Dora took it quite mildly. Indeed, in the days that followed Jill came to think that Angus had been a little hard on Dora. No longer did she and Tom hold possession of the pretty bay. Jill and Timmy played there even more often than they had done before the hotel children arrived. Jill got to discover that the big fair-haired boy and girl were quite nice, and she struck up a lasting friendship with Sheila and Jeanie. Timmy's boat, which survived the regatta, was tied as a dinghy to every craft in turn. Many a race was there between the *Peerless* and the *Wee Craw*, and the honours were fairly evenly divided, for the *Wee Craw* must have her friend the wind.

"It's the worst of her!" Tom would say.

"She hasn't a worst," said Dora. "If it hadn't been for the *Wee Craw* we might have been stuck on that island all night. The old *Peerless* never thought of coming to find us."

Neither did the *Wee Craw*, Jill thought to herself, but decided that it was better not to say that aloud.

"We might never have been friends," was what she did say, "if it hadn't been for the voyage of the *Wee Craw*."

Silas Marner

By

George Eliot

IN the days when the spinning-wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses—and even great ladies, clothed in silk and thread-lace, had their toy spinning-wheels of polished oak—there might be seen in districts far away among the lanes, or deep in the bosom of the hills, certain pallid undersized men, who, by the side of the brawny country-folk, looked like the remnants of a disinherited race.

In that far-off time superstition clung easily round any person or thing that was at all unwonted, and in this way it came to pass that those scattered linen-weavers, for such they were—emigrants from the town into the country—were to the last regarded as aliens by their rustic neighbours, and usually contracted the eccentric habits which belong to a state of loneliness.

In the early years of last century, such a linen-weaver, named Silas Marner, worked at his vocation in a stone cottage that stood among the nutty hedgerows near the village of Raveloe, and not far from the edge of a deserted stone-pit.

The questionable sound of Silas's loom had a half-fearful fascination for the Raveloe boys, who, like the rest of the village, were secretly terrified of the solitary pale man with his large protuberant brown eyes. People said that Silas Marner could cure folks' ills by witchcraft, or put evil spells on those who offended him. For Raveloe was an old-fashioned village of Central England, far from any turnpike, where many dying ideas still lingered and were firmly believed.

It was fifteen years since Silas Marner had first come to Raveloe; he was then simply a pale young man, with short-sighted brown eyes, and a strange, shut-up character. He invited no comer to step across his door-sill, and he never strolled into the village to drink a pint at the Rainbow; in all the years of his life in the village he made no friends, but sat all day and every day, spinning flax and linen as if for dear life at his loom.

There was a happening in the past life of Silas Marner which he never mentioned in the village to any soul. When he had lived in a big town as a young man he had been unjustly accused by the chapel to which he belonged of stealing some money, and had left the town in disgrace. His sweetheart had given him up, and had married William Dane, his own friend, whose treachery it was that had brought the charge against him so that he should not wed Sarah, with whom William himself was in love.

This injustice had bitten deep into Silas Marner's soul. He came to Raveloe and shut himself up to spin in the lonely stone cottage, trusting nobody because of the way he had been treated. He was a good worker, and made many golden guineas spinning linen for the housewives round about; and as he had no one to speak to and nothing else to think of, gold gradually became the only thing he loved in life.

Silas Marner was a miser. He hoarded his guineas in a pot hidden under a loose brick of the floor, and would sit and count them gloatingly at night. He worked early and late, and denied himself every comfort, in order to add to his shining hoard. It was not strange that such a queer man should be feared and distrusted by the country folk round about—a man who sought no company, but whose thoughts were always with his loom and his gold.

But about the Christmas of his fifteenth year in Raveloe a second great change came over Marner's life, and his history became blent in a singular manner with the life of his neighbours.

GODFREY AND DUNSTAN

THE greatest man in Raveloe was Squire Cass, who lived in the large red house with the handsome flight of stone steps in front and the high stables behind it.

Squire Cass had four strapping sons, and it was thought a weakness of his that he kept them all at home in idleness. They would only get into mischief, people said, and they shook their heads over the wild ways of the second son, Dunstan, commonly called Dunsey Cass, who was the black sheep of the family. He was a spiteful fellow, always drinking and betting; he would bring trouble on the family, folks said.

They thought it a thousand pities, too, that Mr. Godfrey, the eldest son, a fine, open-faced, good-natured young man who was to come into the land some day, should take to going along the same road with his brother, as he had seemed to do of late. If he went on in that way he would lose Miss Nancy Lammeter, whom he had long been courting; for it was well known that she had looked very shyly on him since last Whitsuntide twelvemonth, when there was so much talk of his being away from home days and days together.

It was quite true, as the neighbours guessed,

that Godfrey Cass was in trouble in this, his twenty-sixth year. No one in Raveloe (except Dunsey, who had somehow surprised his secret) guessed that Godfrey, in a mad moment some time before, had married Molly Farren in the neighbouring town. She was a young woman who was not only beneath him in station, but who was slowly killing herself, and filling his life with misery, by her dreadful habit of taking drugs. Godfrey knew that the squire had only to hear of this foolish marriage to disinherit his eldest son, and Dunsey was well aware that Godfrey knew it.

For months past Dunsey had made good use of his secret knowledge to get from Godfrey what he wanted, on the threat of telling the squire about Molly. Some time before, when Squire Cass had given Godfrey a large sum of money to pay a bill that was owing, Dunsey had insisted on having the money for his own use, and Godfrey had weakly given in. Now the time had come when the missing money must be produced, or the squire would discover the fraud, and the two brothers one dark November afternoon were angrily discussing their scrape.

At last, after many bitter words, it was decided that Dunsey should take Godfrey's treasured horse, Wildfire, to the meet on the morrow. There he would see some men who wanted to buy the horse, and the money obtained for him would replace what the squire had entrusted to his eldest son. Godfrey declined to go himself, because he was due at Mrs. Osgood's birthday dance near by, and there he would meet Nancy Lammeter. Though he was a married man, he still loved Nancy, and was weak enough to go on making love to her despite the fact that he could not ask her to wed him.

But unfortunately things do not always go as they are planned. Dunsey rode to the meet next day, met his friends and agreed to sell the horse for a hundred and twenty guineas. He said he would deliver Wildfire to his new master that afternoon, as he, Dunsey, did not wish to miss the day's hunting for lack of a horse. But a little later, hurrying to catch up with the rest of the field, he took a fence badly and poor Wildfire was pierced with a hedge-stake.

Dunsey himself was not hurt, and he cared little for the fact that the poor creature died in agony. But he muttered many curses when he remembered that now no hundred and twenty guineas would be forthcoming.

No one was in sight. He left the dead animal in the field and decided to walk home by way of Silas Marner's cottage. For he remembered that the lonely weaver had a hoard of gold, which he might be persuaded or frightened into lending to get Godfrey and Dunsey out of their pressing difficulty.

By the time Dunsey neared the stone-pits the short winter afternoon had turned to dark, and a misty rain was falling. It was difficult to find the way in the fog, but at last he arrived safely at Marner's front door, and saw a light burning. He knocked loudly, but heard nothing in reply. Evidently, in spite of the light, the weaver was out. Dunsey tried the door, and to his surprise it was not fastened. He found himself looking into an empty room lit by a bright fire.

He walked in, to warm himself and await Marner's return. And then temptation came into his dishonest mind. It was such a misty night, he argued, that perhaps the weaver had gone out to fetch something and fallen down the stone-pit and been killed. If the weaver was dead, who had a right to his money? Who would know where his money was hidden? *Who would know that anybody had come to take it away?*

The idea took entire possession of Dunsey. He began to wonder where the money could be. There were only three hiding-places where he had ever heard of cottagers' hoards being found: the thatch, the bed, and a hole in the floor. Marner's cottage had no thatch; and Dunstan's first act was to go up to the bed; but while he did so his eyes travelled eagerly over the floor, where the bricks, distinct in the fire-light, were discernible under the sprinkling of sand. But not everywhere; for there was one spot, and one only, which was quite covered with sand, and sand showing the marks of fingers, which had apparently been careful to spread it over a given space. It was near the treadles of the loom.

In haste he lifted up the bricks and saw two heavy leathern bags. From their weight they must be full of guineas. It took Dunsey only a moment to lift them out and replace the brick and sand. Hardly more than five minutes had passed since he entered the cottage, when he slipped out again with the bags in his hand, closing the door behind him to shut in the stream of light that might betray him.

He was glad the rain and darkness had got thicker, though it was awkward walking with both hands filled with the bags. But when he had gone a yard or two, he might take his time. So he stepped forward into the darkness.

THE MISER'S LOSS

Silas Marner returned to the cottage by the stone-pits not long after Dunsey had stolen away. He had been an errand to the village in the wet, and was looking forward to having his supper by the fire, and then counting his gold, as he loved to do.

He reached his door, and to his short-sighted eyes everything remained as he had left it. He set his supper to cook, and began to think he might as well look at his guineas while he was waiting for it. For joy is the best of wine, and Silas's guineas were a golden wine of that sort.

He rose and placed his candle unsuspectingly on the floor near his loom, swept away the sand without noticing any change, and removed the bricks. The sight of the empty hole made his

heart leap violently, but the belief that his gold was gone could not come at once—only terror, and the eager effort to put an end to the terror. He passed his trembling hand all about the hole, trying to think it possible that his eyes had deceived him; then he held the candle in the hole and examined it curiously, trembling more and more. At last he shook so violently that he let fall the candle, and lifted his hands to his head, trying to steady himself, that he might think.

Had he put his gold somewhere else, by a sudden resolution last night, and then forgotten it? A man falling into dark waters seeks a momentary footing even on sliding stones; and Silas, by acting as if he believed in false hopes, warded off the moment of despair. He searched in every corner, he turned his bed over, and shook it, and kneaded it; he looked in his brick oven where he laid his sticks. When there was no other place to be searched, he kneeled down again and felt once more all round the hole. There was no untried refuge left for a moment's shelter from the terrible truth.

He put his trembling hands to his head, and gave a wild ringing scream, the cry of desolation. Then he rushed out to the village, to the Rainbow, to get help in recovering his treasure.

But though the village hearts warmed to him more in his distress than ever before, and though the magistrate made searching inquiries, there was no clue to the thief. Nothing was ever discovered either of him or of the money, and as the weeks went by the affair was gradually forgotten by all but Silas, whose life now became an empty blank to him, robbed of the one thing he loved.

When Godfrey Cass returned from Mrs. Osgood's party on that foggy night, he was not much surprised to learn that Dunsey had not come home. His brother often stayed away for days at a time, and Godfrey had learnt from someone who had found the horse what had happened to Wildfire, so he thought Dunsey was keeping away until his, Godfrey's, anger had cooled.

But Dunsey did not come back after days, weeks, months. The Cass family and the village grew accustomed to his continued absence, and it never occurred to anyone to connect Dunstan Cass, the squire's son, with the treacherous robbery of a poor weaver.

OUT OF THE SNOW

Christmas came and was celebrated by Squire Cass and his family in the usual way. Nobody mentioned Dunsey, for in truth nobody was sorry for his absence, and all were very jolly without him. Down at the stone-pits Silas Marner spent the day in loneliness, eating his meat in sadness of heart, brooding over his narrow grief. Mrs. Dolly Winthrop, a Raveloe woman, had invited him, in the kindness of her heart, to dinner with herself and her husband in the village, but he refused to go.

The Christmas Day party at the Red House was not the principal of Squire Cass's winter hospitalities. It was his custom to give a great dance on New Year's Eve, when all the society of Raveloe and the neighbourhood counted on meeting. This was the occasion on which fair dames who came on pillions sent their bandboxes before them, supplied with more than their evening costume; for the feast was not to end with a single evening, like a paltry town entertainment, where the whole supply of eatables is put on the table at once, and bedding is scanty. The Red House was provisioned as if for a siege; and as for the spare feather-beds ready to be laid on floors, they were as plentiful as might naturally be expected in a family that had killed its own geese for many generations.

Godfrey Cass was looking forward to this New Year's Eve with a foolish reckless longing, that made him half deaf to his importunate companion, Anxiety.

"Dunsey will be coming home soon: there will be a great blow-up, and how will you bribe his spite to silence?" said Anxiety.

"O, he won't come home before New Year's Eve, perhaps," said Godfrey; "and I shall sit by Nancy then and dance with her, and get a kind look from her in spite of herself."

"But money is wanted in another quarter," said Anxiety, in a louder voice, "and how will you get it without selling your mother's diamond pin? And if you don't get it . . .?"

"Well, but something may happen to make things easier. At any rate, there's one pleasure for me close at hand: Nancy is coming."

New Year's Eve arrived, and so did Miss Nancy Lammeter and her elder sister Priscilla, riding on pillions behind Mr. Lammeter and the servant; and so did many another lady of the neighbourhood and many gentlemen, all attired in their best. Places of honour had been kept for the Miss Lammeters near the head of the principal tea-table in the wainscoted parlour, and Nancy's heart inwardly fluttered at the attentions paid to her by Godfrey Cass, who could hardly bear to be far from her side. After tea the fiddles struck up, the way was opened into the dancing-room, and soon the fun was at its height. And still Godfrey hung about Nancy, and drowned the reproaches of his conscience.

While Godfrey Cass was thus taking draughts of sweet forgetfulness from the presence of Nancy, willingly losing all sense of that hidden bond which at other moments galled and fretted him, Godfrey's wife was walking with slow uncertain steps through the snow-covered Raveloe lanes, carrying her child in her arms.

This journey on New Year's Eve was a premeditated act of vengeance which she had kept in her heart ever since Godfrey, in a fit of passion, had told her he would sooner die than

acknowledge her as his wife. There would be a great party at the Red House on New Year's Eve, she knew; her husband would be smiling and smiled upon, hiding *her* existence in the darkest corner of his heart. But she would mar his pleasure: she would go in her dingy rags, with her faded face, once as handsome as the best, with her little child that had its father's hair and eyes, and disclose herself to the squire as his eldest son's wife. Molly knew that the cause of her dingy rags was the demon Opium to whom she was enslaved, body and soul, except in the lingering mother's tenderness that refused to give him her hungry child. She knew this well; and yet, in the moments of wretched unbenumbed consciousness, the sense of her want and degradation transformed itself continually into bitterness towards Godfrey. *He* was well off; and if she had her rights she would be well off too.

She had started early, but had lingered on the way under shelter waiting for the snow to cease falling, and in the end she found herself belated in the lanes near Raveloe long after darkness had fallen. She was very tired and cold, and did not realize how very near she was to her journey's end. She needed comfort, and she knew but one comforter—the drug, opium, which she took so often. Molly hesitated a moment, but the tempter was too strong for her, and quickly she swallowed a dose. Then she walked on, but more and more drowsily, for the drug was working, and she clutched more and more automatically the sleeping child at her bosom.

Soon she felt nothing but a supreme longing to lie down and sleep. She sank against a straggling furze bush, an easy pillow enough; and the bed of snow, too, was soft. She did not feel that the bed was cold. Her arms still clutched the child, who slumbered on as gently as if it were in its cradle.

But presently Molly was so fast asleep that her grasp slipped and the child awoke, crying peevishly for "mammy." But mammy's ear was deaf.

Suddenly the child's eyes were caught by a bright glancing light on the white ground which it wanted to catch; it tried in vain, and then lifted her head to see where the cunning gleam came from. It came from a very bright place; and the little one, rising on its legs, toddled through the snow, the old grimy shawl in which it was wrapped trailing behind it, and the queer little bonnet dangling at its back—toddled on to the open door of Silas Marner's cottage, and right up to the warm hearth, where there was a bright fire of logs and sticks, which had thoroughly warmed the old sack (Silas's greatcoat) spread out on the bricks to dry. The little one, accustomed to be left to itself for long hours without notice from its mother, squatted down on the sack, and spread its tiny hands towards the blaze, in perfect contentment, gurgling and making many inarticulate communications to the cheerful fire, like a new-hatched gosling beginning to find itself comfortable. But presently the warmth had a lulling effect, and the little golden head sank down on the old sack, and the blue eyes were veiled by their delicate half-transparent lids.

NEW GOLD

That morning Silas Marner had been told by some of his neighbours that it was New Year's Eve, and that he must sit up and hear the old year rung out and the new rung in, because that was good luck and might bring his money back again. This was only a friendly Raveloe jest, but it had perhaps helped to throw Silas into a more than usually excited state. He fell into a kind of trance which sometimes suddenly seized him, as he was standing by the door looking out, and so it happened that although he was in the cottage when the child came in, his sightless eyes never saw her, for their vision was turned inward.

When Marner's sensibility returned he closed the door and turned towards the hearth. The logs had fallen apart and sent forth only a red, uncertain glimmer. In that glow it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth.

Gold!—his own gold—brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! He felt his heart begin to beat violently, and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored treasure. The heap of gold seemed to glow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. He leaned forward at last, and stretched forth his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls. In utter amazement, Silas fell on his knees and bent his head low to examine the marvel: it was a sleeping child—a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head.

Could this be his little sister come back to him in a dream—his little sister whom he had carried about in his arms for a year before she died, when he was a small boy without shoes or stockings? That was the first thought that darted across Silas's blank wonderment. *Was* it a dream? He rose to his feet again, pushed his logs together, and, throwing on some dried leaves and sticks, raised a flame; but the flame did not disperse the vision—it only lit up more distinctly the little round form of the child, and its shabby clothing.

Silas sank into his chair powerless, under the double presence of an inexplicable surprise and a hurrying influx of memories. How and when had the child come in without his knowledge?

But there was a cry on the hearth; the child had awakened, and Marner stooped to lift it on his knee. It clung round his neck, and cried loudly for "mammy." Silas pressed it to him, and almost unconsciously uttered sounds of hushing tenderness, while he bethought himself that some of his porridge, which had got cool

by the dying fire, would do to feed the child with, if it were only warmed up a little.

He had plenty to do through the next hour. The porridge, sweetened with brown sugar, stopped the cries of the little one. Presently it slipped from the weaver's knee and began to toddle about. But soon it fell into a sitting posture, tugging at its boots as if they hurt it, and Silas saw that they were wet through. He got them off with difficulty, and then it occurred to him that the child had been walking in the snow, and could not have been out alone.

Raising the child in his arms, he went to the door, and bending forward he could just discern the marks made by the little feet on the virgin snow, and he followed their track to the furze bushes.

"Mammy!" the little one cried again and again, stretching itself forward so as almost to escape from Silas's arms, before he himself was aware that there was something more than the bush before him—that there was a human body, with the head sunk low in the furze, and half-covered with the shaken snow.

GODFREY'S COWARDICE

It was after the early supper-time at the Red House. Bob Cass, one of the squire's younger sons, was dancing a hornpipe to the admiration of all present, and Godfrey was standing a little way off, not to admire his brother's dancing, but to keep sight of Nancy, who was seated in the group, near her father. It was so pleasant to get long glances at her quite unobserved.

But when Godfrey was lifting his eyes from one of those long glances, they encountered an object as startling to him at that moment as if it had been an apparition from the dead. It was his own child carried in Silas Marner's arms. He knew it in a moment, though he had not seen it for months past.

But now all eyes at that end of the room were bent on Silas Marner, in astonishment at his strange arrival; and no one noticed that Godfrey was white-lipped and trembling.

"I've come for the doctor—I want the doctor, and I'm told he's here," Silas said at once, low and half breathlessly. "It's a woman. She's dead, I think—dead in the snow at the stone-pits—not far from my door."

Godfrey felt a great throb. His own thought—an evil terror to be in any man's mind—was a fear that the woman might *not* be dead.

The squire went to fetch Doctor Kimble from the dancing, and various people pressed forward, interested in the pretty little girl in the weaver's arms.

"What child is it?" said several ladies at once, and, among the rest, Nancy Lammeter, addressing Godfrey.

"I don't know—some poor woman's who has been found in the snow, I believe," was the answer Godfrey wrung from himself with a terrible effort. ("After all, *am* I certain?" he hastened to add, silently, in anticipation of his own conscience.)

"Why, you'd better leave the child here, then, Master Marner," said good-natured Mrs. Kimble, the doctor's wife.

"No—no, I can't part with it, I can't let it go," said Silas abruptly. "It's come to me—I've a right to keep it."

The proposition to take the child from him had come to Silas quite unexpectedly, and his speech, uttered under a strong sudden impulse, was almost like a revelation to himself; a minute before he had no distinct intention about the child.

"Did you ever hear the like?" said Mrs. Kimble, in mild surprise to her neighbour.

But, in spite of the astonishment of everyone, Silas Marner stuck to his resolution. For Doctor Kimble confirmed his notion that poor Molly was dead from exposure in the snow. Godfrey went with him, and a glance told him that the dead woman was indeed his wife. Now was the moment when he should have spoken out and admitted his marriage—should have claimed the child as his own daughter.

But weak cowardice and fear of the scandal and the squire's anger held him silent. Molly had arrived from a distance, and no one else knew her; so she was buried as an unknown woman, and no one disputed the weaver's strange wish to keep the waif who had come to him out of the snow.

Silas had much sympathy from the women for his action, and to Dolly Winthrop he turned humbly for help and advice in the upbringing of a little girl. He called the child Hepzibah, after his own little sister, who had died so many years ago; but Dolly thought that "a hard name" for such a little mite, and it was speedily shortened to Eppie.

Many people were anxious to help. Godfrey, his conscience pricking him, gave Silas money to aid in keeping the child, and Mrs. Winthrop brought over for her the little clothes which her youngest boy, Aaron, now a lad of seven, had long outgrown. She showed Silas how to bathe and feed the child, and soon fell in love with her herself.

"Anybody 'ud think the angels in heaven couldn't be prettier," said Dolly. "And to think how she walked in over the snow, like a little starved robin. Didn't you say the door was open?"

"Yes," said Silas meditatively. "Yes—the door was open. The money's gone I don't know where, and she has come from I don't know where."

So he kept her, as a heaven-sent gift, and gradually she changed the whole of his life, creating fresh and fresh links between him and those from whom he had hitherto shrunk, continually, into narrow isolation.

Unlike the gold which needed nothing, and must be worshipped in close-locked solitude—which was hidden away from the daylight, was deaf to the song of birds, and started to no human tones—Eppie was a creature of endless

claims and ever-growing desires, seeking and loving sunshine, and living sounds, and living movements. The gold had kept his thoughts in an ever-repeated circle, leading to nothing beyond itself; but Eppie was an object compacted of changes and hopes that forced his thoughts onward, and carried them far away from their old eager pacing towards the same blank limit—carried them away to the new things that would come with the coming years, when Eppie would have learned to understand how her father Silas cared for her. The gold had asked that he should sit weaving longer and longer, deafened and blinded more and more to all things except the monotony of his loom and the repetition of his web; but Eppie called him away from his weaving, and made him think all its pauses a holiday.

As the child's mind was growing into knowledge, his mind was growing into memory: as her life unfolded, his soul, long stupefied in a cold narrow prison, was unfolding too, and trembling gradually into full consciousness.

SIXTEEN YEARS AFTER

It was a bright autumn Sunday sixteen years after Silas Marner had found his new treasure on the hearth. The bells of the old Raveloe church were ringing the cheerful peal which told that the morning service was ended, and out of the building came streaming the congregation.

Foremost among these advancing groups of well-clad people, there are some whom we shall recognize, in spite of Time, who has laid his hand on them all. The tall blond man of forty is not much changed in feature from the Godfrey Cass of six-and-twenty: he is only fuller in flesh, and has only lost the indefinable look of youth.

The years have not been cruel to the pretty woman, not much younger than he, leaning on his arm; to all who love human faces best for what they tell of human experience, Nancy's beauty has a heightened interest.

Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Cass have turned round to look for the tall aged man and the plainly dressed woman who are a little behind—Nancy having observed that they must "wait for father and Priscilla"—and now they all turn into a narrower path leading across the churchyard to a small gate opposite the Red House.

Farther behind them it is impossible to mistake Silas Marner. His large brown eyes have a less vague, a more answering gaze; his shoulders are bent and his hair white; but there is the freshest blossom of youth close by his side—a blonde, dimpled girl of eighteen, who has vainly tried to chastise her curly auburn hair into tidy smoothness and sedateness under her brown bonnet; the little ringlets burst away from the restraining comb behind, and show themselves below the bonnet-crown. But that good-looking young fellow, in a new fustian suit, who walks behind her, doesn't want Eppie's hair to be different; he thinks her perfect as she is, and Eppie looks rather shy whenever she glances at him.

"I wish *we* had a little garden, father, with double daisies in, like Mrs. Winthrop's," said Eppie, when they were out in the lane; "only they say it 'ud take a deal of digging and bringing fresh soil—and you couldn't do that, could you, father?"

"Yes, I could do it, child, if you want a bit o' garden: these long evenings, I could work at taking in a little bit o' the waste, just enough for a root or two o' flowers for you; and again, i' the morning, I could have a turn wi' the spade before I sat down to the loom."

"*I* can dig it for you, Master Marner," said the young man in fustian, who was now by Eppie's side. "It'll be play to me after I've done my day's work, or any odd bits o' time when the work's slack. And I'll bring you some soil from Mr. Cass's garden—he'll let me, and willing."

Eppie was delighted when Aaron promised he would come that afternoon to the stone-pits and settle what ground was to be used. She and father Silas—for so she called him, though she knew that she was not his own child, but a little waif sent to him out of the snow—went happily home to dinner.

But in the end it was not the new garden which occupied their attention that afternoon, but something sadly different, which affected Mr. Godfrey Cass of the Red House even more deeply than themselves.

Up at the Red House Godfrey and Nancy, with old Mr. Lammeter and Priscilla as their guests, had eaten their Sunday dinner, and when the visitors departed, which they did early, Godfrey went for a walk, as was his custom, and Nancy sat with her Bible before her; but in reality her thoughts were far from the printed page.

For the fifteen years of their marriage she and her husband had been very happy, and they had only one grief—that no children had come to bless them after one that died in infancy fourteen years before. Godfrey felt this even more bitterly than Nancy did, and about six years before the present date he had been very anxious to adopt a child.

But Nancy Cass had shaken her head. If Providence had made them childless, she considered it would be wrong of them to fly in the face of Providence. Should they do so, the child would turn out ill.

"But why should you think the child would turn out ill?" said Godfrey, in his remonstrances. "She has thriven as well as child can do with the weaver; and *he* adopted her. There isn't such a pretty little girl anywhere else in the parish, or one fitter for the station we could give her. Where can be the likelihood of her being a curse to anybody?"

For it was his daughter, the secret daughter whom he had been ashamed to own, whom Godfrey meant to adopt. But Nancy did not know that Eppie, for whom he had done many kind-

nesses, was more to her husband than any other child, and she continued to refuse her consent.

On this Sunday afternoon it was already four years since there had been any allusion to the subject between them, and Nancy supposed that it was for ever buried.

"I wonder if he'll mind it less or more as he gets older," she thought; "I'm afraid more. Aged people feel the miss of children: what would father do without Priscilla? And if I die, Godfrey will be very lonely—not holding together with his brothers much. But I won't be over-anxious, and trying to make things out beforehand: I must do my best for the present."

Godfrey was very late for tea that afternoon. Nancy knew that he had only gone to the stone-pits to see the draining of the water which was taking place there, but she felt anxious as the time wore on. Suddenly he opened the door and came in. His hands were trembling, and he turned towards her with a pale face and a strange unanswering glance when she spoke to him.

"Sit down, Nancy—there," he said, pointing to a chair opposite him. "I came back as soon as I could to tell you myself, for it'll be a shock. It's Dunstan, my brother Dunstan, that we lost sight of sixteen years ago. We've found him—found his body—his skeleton. The stone-pit has gone dry from the draining; and there he lies—has lain for sixteen years, wedged between two great stones. There's his watch and seals, and there's my gold-handled hunting whip with my name on; he borrowed it the day he went hunting on Wildfire, the last time he was seen."

Godfrey paused, deeply shaken.

"He fell in," he added, in a low but distinct voice. "Dunstan was the man that robbed Silas Marner."

"Oh, Godfrey!" cried Nancy, full of shame.

"There was the money in the pit, all the weaver's money. Everything's been gathered up, and they're taking the skeleton to the Rainbow. But I came back to tell you."

He was silent, looking on the ground for two long minutes. Nancy would have said some words of comfort under this disgrace, but she refrained, from an instinctive sense that there was something behind—that Godfrey had something else to tell her. Presently he lifted his eyes to her face and kept them fixed on her, as he said:

"Everything comes to light, Nancy, sooner or later. When God wills it, our secrets are found out. I've lived with a secret on my mind, but I'll keep it from you no longer. That woman Marner found dead in the snow—Eppie's mother—that wretched woman—was my wife; Eppie is my child."

He paused, dreading the effect of his confession. But Nancy sat quite still, only that her eyes dropped and ceased to meet his. But at last she lifted them up to him again and spoke. There was no indignation in her voice—only deep regret.

"Godfrey, if you had but told me this six years ago we could have done some of our duty by the child. Do you think I'd have refused to take her in if I'd known she was yours?"

At that moment Godfrey felt all the bitterness of an error that was not simply futile but had defeated its own end.

"But we can take Eppie now," said Godfrey. "I won't mind the world knowing at last. I'll be plain and open for the rest of my life."

"It'll be different coming to us now she's grown up," said Nancy, shaking her head sadly.

WHICH FATHER?

Between eight and nine o'clock that evening Eppie and Silas were seated alone in the cottage. On the table near them, lit by a candle, lay the recovered gold—the old long-loved gold, ranged in orderly heaps, as Silas used to range it in the days when it was his only joy. He had been telling her how he used to count it every night, and how his soul was utterly desolate till she was sent to him.

"At first I'd a sort o' feeling come across me now and then," he was saying in a subdued tone, "as if you might be changed into the gold again; for sometimes, turn my head which way I would, I seemed to see the gold; and I thought I should be glad if I could feel it, and find it was come back. But that didn't last long. After a bit, I should have thought it was a curse come again if it had drove you from me, for I'd got to feel the need o' your looks and your voice and the touch o' your little fingers. You didn't know then, Eppie, when you were such a little 'un—you didn't know what your old father Silas felt for you."

"But I know now, father," said Eppie.

A knocking at the door announced Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Cass. Eppie, after placing chairs for them, went to stand against Silas, opposite to them.

"Well, Marner," began Godfrey, trying to speak with perfect firmness, "I'm glad to see you with your money again, that you've been deprived of so many years. It was one of my family did you the wrong—the more grief to me—and I feel bound to make up to you for it in every way. Whatever I can do for you will be nothing but paying a debt, even if I looked no farther than the robbery. Now you're getting an old man, and that money"—pointing to the gold on the table—"won't go far with two to keep. It'd be a great comfort to you to see Eppie well provided for, wouldn't it? You'd like to see her well taken care of by those who can leave her well off and make a lady of her?"

A slight flush came over Marner's face. He was hurt and uneasy.

"I don't take your meaning, sir," he answered.

"Well, my meaning is this, Marner," said Godfrey, determined to come to the point. "Mrs. Cass and I, you know, have no children—nobody to be the better for our good home

and everything else we have—more than enough for ourselves. And we should like to have somebody in the place of a daughter to us—we should like to have Eppie, and treat her in every way as our own child. It 'ud be a great comfort to you in your old age, I hope, to see her fortune made in that way, after you've been at the trouble of bringing her up so well. And it's right you should have every reward for that. And Eppie, I'm sure, will always love you and be grateful to you; she'd come and see you very often, and we should all be on the look-out to do everything we could towards making you comfortable."

Silas could only say faintly:

"Eppie, my child, speak. I won't stand in your way."

Eppie took her hand from her father's, and came forward a step. Her face was flushed. She dropped a low curtsy, first to Mrs. Cass, and then to Mr. Cass, and said:

"Thank you, ma'am—thank you, sir. But I can't leave my own father, nor own anybody nearer than him. And I don't want to be a lady—thank you all the same." (Here Eppie dropped another curtsy.) "I couldn't give up the folks I've been used to."

Eppie's lip began to tremble a little at the last words. She retreated to her father's chair again, and held him round the neck; while Silas, with a subdued sob, put up his hand to grasp hers.

"But you must make sure, Eppie," said Silas, in a low voice—"you must make sure as you won't ever be sorry, because you've made your choice to stay among poor folks, and with poor clothes and things, when you might ha' had everything o' the best."

"I can't feel as I've got any father but one," said Eppie impetuously, while the tears gathered. "I've always thought of a little home where he'd sit i' the corner, and I should fend and do everything for him: I can't think o' no other home. I wasn't brought up to be a lady, and I can't turn my mind to it. I like the working-folks, and their victuals, and their ways. And," she ended passionately, while the tears fell, "I'm promised to marry a working-man, as'll live with father, and help me to take care of him."

* * *

There was one time of the year which was held in Raveloe to be especially suitable for a wedding. It was when the great lilacs and laburnums in the old-fashioned gardens showed their golden and purple wealth above the lichen-tinted walls, and when there were calves still young enough to want bucketfuls of fragrant milk. People were not so busy then as they must become when the full cheese-making and the mowing had set in; and besides, it was a time when a light bridal dress could be worn with comfort and seen to advantage.

Happily the sunshine fell more warmly than usual on the lilac tufts the morning that Eppie was married, for her dress was a very light one—white with tiny pink sprigs—and her hair looked like the dash of gold on a lily. One hand was on her husband's arm, and with the other she clasped the hand of her father Silas.

"You won't be giving me away, father," she had said before they went to church, "you'll only be taking Aaron to be a son to you." Dolly Winthrop walked behind with her husband, and there ended the little bridal procession.

Afterwards they walked back to the stone-pits, where there were now a large garden and other alterations made by Mr. Cass, the landlord, to suit Silas's larger family—for Aaron and Eppie were to live with him there. The garden was fenced with stones on two sides, but in front there was an open fence, through which the flowers shone with answering gladness.

"Oh, father," said Eppie, "what a pretty home ours is! I think nobody could be happier than we are!"

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CROSS PURPOSES

By M. Baines Reed

"WHERE are you going, Juliet?" demanded Mistress Slade. "Have you no needlework, no spinning, that you must needs go gadding about the country? Modest maidens should bide at home."

Juliet Carey looked at her aunt with an expression in which dislike and fear were about equally blended.

"I am bound for the village," she said, "to see Mistress Barrett, who has been sick this week past—and is asking for me."

"Indeed, I might have guessed it. Mistress Barrett, forsooth, whose husband is the most obstinate malignant in the village. It is well known that he fought for the man Charles Stuart at Naseby, and if it were not for his wound I'll warrant he would have been with the tyrant's son at Worcester. His daughter is indeed as a brand plucked from the burning, but I'll not have you go to his house."

The colour flamed into Juliet's cheeks. "And if Jack Barrett did stand by my father's side at Naseby, is that any reason why I should neglect his wife?" she asked.

"Hoity-toity, girl! Will you bandy words with me? That I forbid it is reason enough. So long as you bide in your uncle's house you shall have no dealings save with such sober and quiet folk as you may meet there."

"It is my father's house," said Juliet hotly, "and it will be restored to him when the king comes home again."

"Aye, or when roses grow on an ivy bush," sneered the lady. "And in the meantime I would counsel you to bear yourself more seemly to your elders, unless you wish to follow your godless father into beggary."

"Oh, if I only could——" began the girl, but her uncle cut her short.

"Peace, child," he said, sternly but not unkindly. "You know not what you say. It is no life for a young maid; nor, though I loved him once, do I hold that your father is a fitting man to have you in his care; being, as he is, a son of Amalek, and high in the favour of him they call their king. I would not let you go to him if I could. As for the house and lands, you know well that they have been bestowed upon me by the Parliament; nevertheless because you were my sister's child you will be ever welcome here. Only strive to content yourself with what you have."

"Aye, indeed, for a more thankless hussy was never seen," interpolated his wife.

"Nay, be not too much angered with the maid. She is but what her upbringing has made of her, and I doubt not she will mend. Let us labour rather to bring her to a better mind and to purge her of that light and worldly nature, the which, poor child, is her only heritage."

Adam Slade spoke with such grave authority that he silenced both the disputants, and Juliet made haste to escape from the room.

She wandered aimlessly out into the woods which lay close about the house, and if she had inherited a light nature it was certainly not apparent in her face as she tried for the hundredth time to face the dismal prospect before her—an unloved pauper in her father's house. Her uncle, it is true, wished her well. He was a Puritan, a roundhead, he had fought against the king, he stood for everything that she had been brought up to detest, and yet she could not help respecting a man of such sincere and simple life; and she was grateful for the sense of duty that made him offer her a home.

But as for her aunt—that was a different matter. There was no simplicity or sincerity about Mistress Slade. The lady had been an ardent royalist, but had changed her mind when loyalty grew dangerous, and strove to show the depth of her convictions by her intolerance of the party she had left, and by being more Puritan than the Puritans themselves.

She had had her reward, for her piety had won her the hand and the heart of straightforward Adam Slade, who, poor gentleman, would have broken that same heart could he have foreseen that his widow would be one of the first to welcome Charles II back to England. She frankly hated the niece whose sharp eyes read her shallow little soul, and she made the girl's life a constant burden.

But her aunt's malice, vexatious as it was, was as nothing to the sickening fear at the back of Juliet's mind. It was not a month since the young king had met with crushing disaster at Worcester, and he and his followers were even then being hunted over the country like wild beasts.

Juliet did not know where her exiled father was. She had heard nothing of him for two long years; but for all that, she was sure that he must have returned with the king's army, and every day she dreaded to hear the news of his capture or death.

She choked back what was almost a sob, and as she did so she heard a voice close at hand that whispered her name.

Trouble had taught the girl a caution beyond her years. As she turned to pick flowers, and so gradually strayed into the undergrowth, no one could have guessed how wildly her heart was leaping for joy; and certainly no one could have guessed that the haggard ragamuffin who presently held her in his arms was that once gay and gallant cavalier Sir Edmund Carey.

At first neither could speak, then anxiety gave Juliet words: "You should not be here," she said; "it is far too dangerous. I had prayed that you might be safely out of the country by this time."

"Why, so I was, sweetheart," he answered cheerily, "and aboard a French ship making for Calais; but I could not bear to go without a sight of my daughter. I won upon the skipper to set me ashore, and I have been lurking in the woods these three days to get speech with you. How goes it, dearest? Are you happy? Does your uncle use you well?"

Tears were in Juliet's eyes, but she answered bravely: "Well enough, father."

Sir Edmund looked at her almost wistfully. "He is an honest man as roundheads go. With him you are at least assured of bread to eat, whereas with me——"

The girl seized his arm. "Oh, father, take me—take me!" she cried eagerly. "I care nothing for bread to eat. I had ten thousand times rather starve with you than live softly here. You will take me, father—say you will!"

His face relaxed into a smile. "Surely I will take you," he said. "It is for that very thing that I have come, and it would have wellnigh broken my heart if you had wished to stay. But I knew my brave lass would not fail."

"Say, rather, that it would break my heart to stay behind," said Juliet. "But when are we to go, father—and how?"

"Trouble not for that. It is all arranged. My French skipper has sworn me that he will wait for us to-night under the lee of Black Nest Rock, and in the meantime I have contrived to get speech with my old boatman Jack Barrett. He, at least, has remained faithful through good and through ill, and he will row us thither to-night so soon as the tide serves."

"But, alas! father, did he not tell you that there are troopers in the village, some half-dozen or so of Cromwell's Ironsides, and every night they ride about the coast searching the rocks and the woods? It is a marvel that you have escaped them."

"They do not search the Manor woods," said Sir Edmund lightly. "It is for that that I have hidden myself under your uncle's very nose. There are but six of them it seems, and we should be able to slip through their fingers; they cannot be in every place at once, nor dare they disperse for fear of ambushes. Therefore, if they ride west to-night, we will embark at

the eastern jetty; but if they go east, we must make shift to get aboard in the creek under the west cliff. Can you come thither, sweetheart, alone and in the darkness?"

"Surely," said Juliet proudly, "but how can we tell which way the roundheads are to ride?"

"Jack can find out that, for their plans are no secret in the village; but he dare not seek me here again; therefore, to let me know it must be your part."

"But how?"

"Jack's daughter is maid at the Manor, so he tells me."

"Aye, but I do not trust her. She would betray us to my aunt."

"No matter; we have framed the message so that she shall have nothing to betray. Now give good heed, daughter, for on this our life or death depend. If she brings you word from Jack that the pears in his garden are ripe, and that he prays you to come and taste them, that will mean that the jetty is safe; and you must put a light in your window so that I may know that it is so; but if you hear that the pears will not be ready till next week, then show no light, and I will look for you at the creek about ten of the clock, when the tide begins to ebb. Can you remember, sweetheart?"

"Indeed I can," said Juliet, and repeated her instructions to prove it.

"We dare stay no longer," said her father, "but in an hour or two we shall meet again, and then not Noll or all his troopers shall take you from me. Till that time, dearest, farewell."

Juliet seemed to tread on air as she returned to the house. Her head was whirling, she could give no heed to the ordinary affairs of life, and only the urgent need to avert suspicion could make the girl show even a semblance of her former listless manner. It seemed that the dragging hours would never pass. The needlework at which she sat under Mistress Slade's hostile eye had never seemed so tedious and had never been so ill done—as that lady presently informed her.

"A careless, idle hussy! It is the third time that you have broken the thread, and it is tangled now worse than useless. But those that will not work, neither shall they eat. You shall go supperless to bed for this, my fine mistress, and to-morrow you shall make it straight before ever you set foot out of doors. Go to your room, and let me have no more of such doings!"

Juliet went gladly enough, forcing back the smile upon her lips and saying "Good night" with all the meekness that she could muster.

On her way upstairs she met Martha Barrett, the maid, and she lingered for a moment or two waiting for her to deliver the message. Martha curtsied primly, but not a word as to pears ripe or unripe fell from her lips.

It was very strange. Could she have forgotten? For, of course, she did not know the importance of her charge.

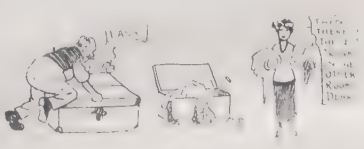
Juliet determined to try a hint. "The pears in the Manor garden are wellnigh ripe," she ventured. "Your father used to have some fine ones—are they ripe yet?"

"Nay, verily," replied Martha, "my father says that it will be full a week till they are ready; but for myself"—and here she put on an air that she had copied closely from Mistress Slade—"I pay scant heed to such enticements of the flesh."

That was enough for Juliet. It meant that the troopers were to ride east, and she skipped up to her room with a song stifled on her lips, determined to sit all evening in the dark, rather than let her window show the faintest gleam of light.

She sat alone hugging her happy thoughts and trying to turn her mind from the long and gloomy path between the castle and the creek, along which she would presently have to grope her way. It was no good thinking about that, better far to dwell upon the happy life that she and her father would lead in France, together and free, no matter how poor they were. And then she bethought her that though all her father's goods had been confiscated there was still a little casket of jewels belonging to her scarcely remembered mother, which she had managed to secrete at the back of a closet. This must not be left behind; and after a great deal of groping and fumbling in the dusty corner she succeeded in getting it out, and put it upon the broad window-ledge to inspect the contents by what dim light was left her.

There was little of price. Edmund Carey's wife had come to him almost portionless, and his own money had been spent so lavishly upon the king's cause that there was hardly any left even for necessities, and none at all for such things as jewels. But there were a few really beautiful and



valuable heirlooms which had belonged to successive Lady Careys for generations—a long necklet of pearls and one of amethyst, a jewelled girdle worked with little sapphire flowers, a few rings and brooches, and a quaint old head-tire, dating from the Tudors and glittering with gems of every colour.

Juliet was daughter of Eve enough to delight in these pretty things. She put the pearl chain round her neck, slipped the rings on to her fingers, and turned as she thought to look at herself in the mirror, but in reality to meet the disapproving gaze of Mistress Slade, who was standing silently by the door. Instantly Juliet swept the casket behind the curtain, but it was too late, and the jewels about her neck betrayed her. In another minute her aunt was standing by the window turning over her little treasures with scandalized curiosity.

"What Satan's playthings have we here?" she said. "Is that the way you pass your time, decking yourself out like a Jezebel—adorning yourself with gold and jewels like the daughters of Babylon? How came you by these gewgaws?"

"They were my mother's," said Juliet sullenly, taking off the offending jewels.

"Your mother's, forsooth! Then they are forfeit with your other goods, and you have no right to lay a finger on them. Bring me candles here that I may see what they are."

Candles, and in the window! Juliet's heart seemed to stand still. It would be the agreed signal. Was everything to be ruined and her father betrayed by such an unlucky accident? She was so much taken aback that for a moment she lost her presence of mind.

"I do not know where the candles are," she muttered lamely, "but I do not want the jewels. Take them, dear aunt, they are yours. You can look at them to-morrow at your ease."

Her over-eagerness only served to excite Mistress Slade's suspicions. She was convinced that the girl was hiding other jewels, and as the candles were indeed close at hand, she lighted them firmly, deaf to Juliet's incoherent protest, placed them on the window-ledge, and began a minute and leisurely examination of the casket and its contents.

The girl was meanwhile in an agony of helplessness. She pictured her father reading the signal from his hiding-place in the woods and speeding joyfully towards the jetty; she fancied him a prisoner with his hands tied being led away by mocking roundheads; she saw his trial, heard him condemned, and then—she could bear it no longer, and raising her arm she knocked the nearest candle on to the floor.

"Fie! for shame!" cried Mistress Slade, "you shall be whipped, girl, if you dare to do such things! See the grease upon my kirtle! Stand back there by the bed and do not come one step nearer, or I will have you locked into the closet."

Juliet obeyed. There was nothing else to do. She looked on in despairing misery while her aunt relit the candle and finished her inspection. Nay more, she had to stand meekly and listen to a lecture upon the sinful vanity of jewellery and the wickedness of an unruly temper, while all the time the candles were shining their message into the night, the message which would bring her father to the jetty into the very arms of his enemies.

At length Mistress Slade departed with the jewels, and the candles were out almost before the door had closed behind her; but though she extinguished them Juliet knew that it was too late, and that the signal once given could never be recalled.

She was not the girl to sit down tamely under such a misfortune. If her father was to die, she could at least do her best to die with him; and there was still a chance—a bare chance—that she might manage to intercept and warn him before he met his foes. Hastily she flung a dark cloak over her shoulders, opened the door quietly, and slipped out into the passage. Her most direct way was through the great hall, but she could hear the sound of voices below and guessed that her uncle was sitting there as he often did of an evening in converse with his pastor. There remained the back staircase, and after peering cautiously up and down the passage she made a dash for it and crept unobserved down to the kitchen door.

Here came a check which made her bolt back half-way up the stairs again, and kept her there quivering with impatience for the next ten minutes; for just outside the door stood the maid Martha, talking in low tones to Adam Slade's groom.

Poor Juliet, harried and despairing as she was, and driven to madness by the trivial accidents which were proving so fatal in their results, had perforce to arm herself with what little fortitude was left

"Raising her arm she knocked the nearest candle on to the floor. 'Fie! for shame!' cried Mistress Slade"

Drawn by C. E. Brock

her and to watch in silence Mistress Martha's coy advances and the groom's gratified smirk.

And yet if she could only have heard what they were saying, how her whole soul would have blazed with relief and joy!

"Do you like pears, Master William?" asked Martha.

"I hope my mind is set on higher things than pears," replied the groom; "and yet I will admit that to the carnal appetite a pear is a toothsome morsel."

"My father has the finest pears that ever were seen," said the maid, raising her eyes, and then demurely dropping them, "and they are now at perfection. He told me so this very afternoon, and was wonderful set that I should bid Mistress Juliet to come and taste them."

"Mistress Juliet is a froward and worldly baggage," was William's indignant comment. "It is not meet that the daughter of the Amalekite should feast while honest folk go empty."

"Why, so thought I," said Martha delighted, "and so I did not give her the message. Therefore, Master William, if it please you, come to-morrow, and you shall have as many pears as you wish, and my lady may go without."

"Verily, damsel, it is a kindly thought. Be assured that I will come; though indeed it is perhaps less for the pears than for the maid who gives them to me."

"You are welcome however you come," said Martha bridling with pleasure, "and now give you good night."

At last she came in and shut the door. She turned the key and shot home the bolts before she went into the kitchen.

Instantly Juliet had darted from her hiding-place. A glance was enough to show her that she could not unbolt the door without the noise betraying her, but a few yards away was a window, and in the twinkling of an eye she was out of it and was speeding across the yard as fast as she could run.

She dashed full tilt down the path to the jetty, stumbling blindly over the rough, uneven way, and finished by losing her balance altogether and coming down at full length upon the slippery stones at the bottom.

It was Sir Edmund who ran to pick her up.

"Courage, sweetheart," he whispered, "your troubles are nearly over now."

Juliet's breath was almost knocked out of her, but she managed to gasp: "It was the wrong signal! Jack Barrett is not here, and the roundheads may come any minute. Let us run while there is yet time."

Sir Edmund stared blankly at her. "But you showed a light," he said.

"Not I, it was my aunt! I could not help it! There is no time to tell you how it chanced. Come quickly, we may yet escape them."

The cavalier wasted no more words, but turned to the path which skirted the bay. It was the only road to the creek.

He led the way, sword in hand, and his daughter followed, scarcely daring to breathe. They had hardly covered twenty yards when the knight's quick ear caught the sound of an approaching step. He thrust Juliet back into the shadow of a boulder and flattened himself against it, hoping that the darkness would hide him.

The steps came on slowly, and the misty shape of a man showed for an instant against the sky. He reached the boulder, was almost past it; then something caught his eye and he halted.

In another instant he was on his back, with Sir Edmund's sword at his throat.

"If you make a sound I will run you through," breathed the cavalier fiercely.

To his infinite surprise the prisoner began to laugh.

"Eh, Sir Edmund, but you be hasty. Wellnigh broke my skull, you have."

"Jack!" came from both the fugitives.

"Aye, sir, himself."

"You have come to warn us!"

"Warn you, sir, of what?" asked Jack scrambling to his feet. "There's naught to warn you of. Here am I, and the boat is moored at the jetty. What better?"

"But the troopers!" cried Juliet. "I gave the wrong signal!"

"No, indeed, Missy. They are away to the creek. You were quite right to show a light. Did not my girl tell you that the pears were ripe, as I bade her do?"

"Did you bid her say that? She told me that they would not be ready for a week."

"The greedy, lying hussy! She shall suffer for it, I promise you. And yet you showed a light?"

"It was my aunt who lit it, in spite of me."

"Then," laughed Sir Edmund, "between the two of them they have brought us to safety. Perhaps the luck has turned at last. Come, let us aboard, and then for France till the king enjoys his own again."

HELPING UNCLE USEFUL

More Holidays

"YOU'RE looking very well," remarked Uncle Useful, putting his head in at the Den door one morning.

"Yes, I managed to have a fairly decent holiday," I answered, "though what with the rain and——"

"Just so," broke in Uncle Useful, "and I'm thinking of following your example. I shall be away on holiday the next three weeks, and, as I'm—like yourself—touring about in the car, I don't know where I shall be. So don't forward any letters. You can answer any little queries that come along, can't you?"

"Of course," I responded airily. "Hope you'll have a good time."

Just then Covers Man poked his head in at the door. He was munching a bath bun, and seemed to be thinner than ever. He brushed a crumb away with an apologetic air.

"Oh, I just called in to say I am off for my holidays. Would you mind carrying on while I'm away?"

"Where are you off to?" I inquired.

"Oh, Spain; so no letters will be forwarded. Just keep the artists in order, will you? And we want a cover for the September number. Bye-bye."

The Lodger is Going Away

No sooner had he gone than the Lodger knocked at the door.

"Don't come in!" I shouted. But he came in all the same, with that quiet, insinuating air that distinguishes him.

"Mr. Editor," he began, "I am going for a few days' vacation. Would you mind looking after my correspondence, as I have left directions that no letters be forwarded?"

"But what shall I do to them?"

"Oh, just answer any little queries, and say I shall be back in a fortnight."

"Right-oh," I answered wearily, "though I hope to goodness nothing happens whilst you're all away merry-making. What you people want holidays for I *don't* know."

Answering Enquirers

Well, nothing did happen the first day. One reader wrote to Uncle Useful and wanted to know how to feed her pet rabbit. I turned up an old number of LITTLE FOLKS, found an article on rabbits, and copied it out word for word. Then I went to sleep—the place was so peaceful-like, with so many people away.

The second day nothing happened, except that two artists brought covers along—one of a girl singing, and the other of a haystack on fire. I told them to squeeze them into one—the girl singing at one end of the picture and the haystack burning at the other. I said if they could introduce the Stadium at Wembley into the middle I thought it would be very effective. They both tore their hair (it was long in both cases), and departed. I slept all the afternoon, and dreamed I was on holiday again, and that Uncle Useful was painting a picture of a fire brigade for the September cover.

The third day, however, things began to get lively. A great, big man with a nasty

face and a huge stick called to see the Lodger. He said he had brought the account from the tailor's for the last suit of clothes, that it was very much overdue, and would I mind paying for it on the spot? I told him to go along the second corridor on the left, then up three flights of stairs, then down two, then turn to the left, then take the third turning on the right, and knock at the second door, where it said "Cashier's Office." He looked at me suspiciously, but at last departed. Carrots came round three hours after and said a strange man with a big stick was still wandering round the corridors looking for the Lodger. I hoped he would not be able to find his way back to the Den, but I felt somewhat uneasy, nevertheless.

Bathing the Bird

I turned to the correspondence. Another reader wanted to know about rabbits, and still another asked what to do with mushrooms. "Eat them," I wrote on a post card to each.

But then I came to a poser:

Dear Uncle Useful,—I'm in terrible trouble and I have heard from several of my friends how very helpful you are, so I decided to write to you.

I have a little goldfinch named Bobby. And he is very tame and sweet. But he won't bath himself. Once a week I place a little glass dish of water in his cage. I've tried warm and cold water but it's no good. So I started making him go in, but he only got sulky, cold and uncomfy, so I left off. Now he has started scratching himself. I give him plenty of green stuff and clean him out regularly, so it can't be that. He must want a bath. Ought I to continue to make him bath, or should I let him go dirty? Can you help me? Dear Uncle Useful, if you can, please do!

I remain an interested reader of Little Folks (particularly of yr. pages). Dorothy.

Now this was rather awkward. As a matter of fact, I did not know that birds were in the habit of taking a bath—though, of course, when you come to think of it, they must do. After prolonged thought I finally sent a little note to Carrots to come and see me. He arrived post haste; in fact, he hadn't made time to wash a big ink-stain off his face.

"Carrots," I said meditatively, "you, of course, at some time or other have been in charge of a bird—a chicken, or a goldfinch, or a parrot. Would you mind telling me what is the usual procedure when the little thing wants a bath?"

Carrots looked puzzled. But when I explained to him a little more clearly he grew indignant.

Carrots' Opinion

"A shame!" he exclaimed. "Yer don't want to bathe the little things, I don't think. Why, my Aunt Jemima had a dorg once, and, silly like, she bathed 'im. Put *soap* on 'im" (with a look of scorn), "and 'e died, 'e did. Locked up at 'er so mournful-like afore he died, too. I don't 'old with so much washing, I don't. 'Tisn't nateral. Cruelty to animals, I call it."

"Carrots," I said sternly, "you're a disgrace to your profession. Go and wash your face!"

Carrots departed with a look of disgust.

Clearly he is not much of an authority on washing.

Then a bright idea occurred to me. I sent for the two tame artists who had called before, and told them I had decided that the picture of the girl singing and the haystack burning, with the Stadium of Wembley in the centre, was hardly suitable for Little Folks. Could they not, instead, paint a sweet little picture of a bird having a bath?

"A bird having a bath?" repeated the first one in bewilderment.

"Yes," I replied sharply. "The usual thing, of course. On the left the door, with 'Bathroom' painted in black letters on a white foreground. Then in the centre—well, the bath—you know, the usual thing birds have: nice towel rail, bath towel, soap-rack, sponge, shaving mirror—no, no shaving mirror, of course, just ordinary glass, and—and—well, tooth-brush and comb. You know. Surely you've painted it hundreds of times."

"Not quite like that," stated No. 1.

"Never in my time," objected No. 2.

"Well, what *do* you do when a bird ought to have a bath, and won't? Answer me that."

"I don't know," said No. 1 sulkily.

"I don't know," echoed the other. Clearly they were no good, so I sent them going.

Why it Wouldn't Wash

After that I sat and thought for an hour. Then I had tea. Then I sat and thought for another hour. It seemed that this was one of those cases where one would have to bring imagination to bear. Why, anyhow, did Dorothy's goldfinch refuse to take

his bath? Why does anyone refuse to have a bath? Why does Carrots persistently refuse to wash his face? Why—— Ah, I had it at last. Boys don't like to wash their faces. Dorothy's goldfinch was named "Bobby," therefore it was a boy bird; therefore it refused to wash its face. If it had been a girl bird with the name "Margaret" or "Gwendoline," it would probably have washed its face twice per day and combed its hair respectably. As it was, it was a boy bird, and a young one at that. *Of course* it refused to wash its face. Dorothy must be firm. She must talk to Bobby, point out that dirtiness is worse than godlessness, tell him she would not take him out on Sundays if he refused to perform his ablutions. After this little talk she should take him up gently but firmly, carefully cover him with soap, applied on a neat little face-glove. Then rinse him all over, afterwards drying him with a nice warm towel. As a special treat she should afterwards allow him an extra bit of sugar in his tea.

Do Birds Drink Tea?

I called the typist and dictated a long letter to Dorothy on the above lines. The typist took it all down without a murmur until I said about the sugar in his tea.

"Excuse me, sir," she interrupted, "but I don't think birds have tea."

"Don't have tea?" I replied in surprise. "What next? You'll say they don't have breakfast next. Well, say nothing about the tea. But—dear me—say: 'Put a little extra sugar in his egg and milk, and tuck him up well at bedtime.' How will that do?"

The typist looked suspicious, so I told her to hold over the letter till the following morning.

I spent a sleepless night, but next day great was my joy when I found a picture post card on my desk, with the message, "Going fine. All well.—UNCLE USEFUL." It was addressed from the Duck and Green Peas Hotel, Slocumbe-in-Marsh. So I sent off a telegram:

"UNCLE USEFUL, Duck and Green Peas, Slocumbe.

"Dorothy's goldfinch named Bobby refuses bath. What do?—EDITOR."

Four anxious hours passed, and then came the welcome reply:

"Try sand instead of water, and don't worry me again.—U. USEFUL."

The situation was saved, but I hope no more birds will want bathing until Uncle Useful returns, don't you?

The Editor

Carrots on Soap

⟨As a Substitute for Soap on Carrots!⟩

(As reported by FELIX LEIGH)

'Aving o'er'eard the Boss's talk,
With which I do not 'old,
We'll now consider Soap, although
That subject leaves me cold.

'Oo was it that invented Soap?
The Chinese, I should say
(Like gunpowder and that Ma Jong),
For wash experts are they.

But though we're told they launder well,
And make your shirt-cuffs shine,
Those Chinks I've met ain't got a skin
As pink and fresh as mine.

British complexions rule the world,
But we're no Soapy Race.
(Speakin' for self, one splash per day
Suffices for a face.)

Believe me, readers, Soap's a goal
That's only meant for duds,
For life is full of 'igher things
Than stirring up the suds.

Brighten the mind, dear girls and boys,
As Carrots tries to do.
It's brains, not lather, is the stuff
That 'elps a feller through!

The Starling

A School Story
By
Evelyn Smith

"NOW Flora, you mustn't be a silly girl. It isn't as if it were your first day. Kitty'll take care of you. She took care of you last week, and yesterday, and she'll do it to-day, too. Won't you, Kitty?"

"Yes; and to-morrow, and the next day, and next week, and next year," promised Kitty, standing very straight and swinging her strap of books as if threatening an enemy with it. "Come along, Flora. It's nice at school to-day. It's object-lesson. It's nearly sure to be a bird. It was a beetle last week, and a mouse the one before that—a wee white mouse that belongs to Letty Springer's brother. Letty carried it round for everyone to look at. The birds are lovely—there is a case of them, all sorts, big hawks, and tiny little nutmeg birds, in the corridor outside the lab. If we hurry we might be in time to go and look at them, and Miss Francis might come and unlock the glass door and get out our bird, the one for our lesson, and give it to me or you to carry up to the form-room. Wouldn't you love to carry a bird, Flora?"

"I had a chicken in my hand once in the summer holidays," said Flora, growing interested. And, telling about the twelve white chickens, and how their feathers began to grow, and how the red combs sprouted up on the little cocks, she forgot her fears and dislikes, and hurried along towards the low brick buildings of St. Hildegarde's as if she were as eager to be there in good time as was Kitty herself.

Kitty was relieved. She thought her next-door neighbour the prettiest little girl she had ever seen, and couldn't imagine how she always managed to be so spick and span, with never a hole in her stocking or a speck of mud on her shoes or a hair of her shining fair head out of place. At half-term, when it had been decided that Flora was to go to school, and she had been told to look after her, she had at first felt very proud and important. She had led Flora up to Miss Francis and had asked if she might sit by her, and had shown her the best way to stack her books in her desk so that the lid would shut. And Flora had played with Kitty's friends at lunch time when new girls are often lonely. Everything should have been all right. The difficulty was that Flora, a delicate little only girl, was easily miserable and frightened. She cried when she didn't know what Miss Francis meant; she cried when she was "it"; she cried if she made a blot or didn't get a sum right. Every morning she didn't want to go to school, and quite a lot of time was spent in coaxing her to start. Kitty liked to be early, with a good ten minutes for talk or play before prayers; since half-term she had been in only just before the bell rang. And Kitty's friends—Phyllis, and Betsy, and Lil, and Letty—were beginning to think Flora rather a baby and to wonder if it might not be better for her and Kitty to play by themselves. But, for all these disadvantages, Kitty didn't think of deserting Flora. She wished she wouldn't cry quite so much, but she couldn't stop taking care of her because of that.

"I wonder which bird we'll have," she sighed, as she and Flora and Letty and Lil flattened their noses against the big case by the science room.

"Move on, Second Form!" said a prefect's voice. "You know you oughtn't to be loitering here just now. I suppose you don't want to be reported to Miss Francis."

Letty and Kitty looked suitably indifferent, while Flora gave a tearful gulp at the mere thought.

"Weeping again?" commented Letty. "Cry, baby, cry, put your finger in your eye."

"She isn't crying," said Kitty.

"*Isn't!* I say, Lil, Kitty says it isn't crying!"

"Where's your hankie, pet? Dry its little eyes."

"Be quiet," said Kitty crossly, as Flora shrank back with a look of terror. "Don't be mean."

The footsteps of the prefect drew near, and everyone thought it wiser to vanish as

quickly as possible. As she settled into her place in the class-room of the Second, Kitty, who was generally in high spirits, felt quite unlike her usual self. She saw Flora fumbling in her desk, and knew she couldn't remember whether it was a psalter or a hymn-book day, but she didn't lean over to remind her. If she just looked round she'd see what the others had.

But Kitty couldn't keep up this attitude of aloofness. If the day had begun badly for her, it had begun rather worse for Flora. After prayers fresh troubles developed. Flora had forgotten to do one of her sums, and she didn't know that she ought to have brought coloured chalks for the map. She cried. Kitty tried to console her by smuggling stumps of red and blue and yellow into her pencil-box.

"*Kitty!* Why are you out of your seat?" demanded Miss Francis. Kitty skipped back, looking guilty. But, as she turned from Flora, she had seen a sight which cheered her. On the little shelf behind the blackboard was one of the stuffed birds, with a straight bill and a stumpy tail, and beautiful, glossy, dark plumage all shining with purple and green—a starling. Kitty knew starlings well at home—they sat round the chimney-pots with their tails turned in as if for warmth, or ran about on the grass looking for worms. She was so pleased to see it that, forgetting all about the scene outside the case, she signed to Letty and Lil to look. Object-lesson was to begin in two minutes. In two minutes she'd perhaps carry the soft starling round the class. Darling—darling rhymed with starling. She forgot all about her copy and, leaning over to Flora, whispered:

"See that starling!
What a darling!"

Flora jumped and gazed, and a drop of ink from her suspended pen fell on her copy in a big blot, with rays standing out all round it. Kitty gasped, and Flora's lower lip began to tremble.

"*Kitty*, out of your place *again!*" Miss Francis was really annoyed. "Why don't you leave Flora alone?"

'Kitty looked stonily at it, then stretched out a finger and gently touched its head"

Drawn by Norman Sutcliffe

Kitty looked ruefully at her own copy-book.

"I noticed she was crying when you came in this morning. You mustn't worry her. It's too bad."

In utter amazement Kitty gazed at Miss Francis, but she had crossed over to Flora.

"Cheer up, Flora! Come along, we'll soon have that blot out. Who has a sharp knife?"

Knives were thrust from all directions, and Miss Francis chose one shaped like a fish, and opened it.

"See, we'll scrape it out with the fish's sharp tongue—that's it. Don't plunge in your pen again, dip it in. Now, cheer up, and in a minute you shall carry round the bird for the girls to see."

In that moment Kitty knew what it is to feel one's heart sink into one's boots. It was bad enough to be misjudged by Miss Francis, but worse—far worse—to lose her chance of holding the bird, the starling who was a darling. She had wanted the privilege so badly. But the bird, on its little twiggy stand, was delivered to Flora, and proudly she carried it round the class. Her eyelashes were still wet, but she smiled as she stood by each desk and waited for each girl to have a good look. She gave Kitty an extra long turn.

"It's so soft," she whispered, putting her cheek against its back.

Kitty looked stonily at it, then stretched out a finger and gently touched its head.

"Kitty—hands in your lap!" warned Miss Francis sharply.

At last the lesson was over, and Kitty was glad. Generally she got ten for her written account of the object-lesson. "This time I'm sure I shan't get more than six," she thought gloomily.

She was very quiet for the rest of the morning. By one o'clock Miss Francis seemed to have forgotten her annoyance, for as the Second put on their things in the cloak-room, she said, in a nice friendly voice:

"Ready first, Kitty? Then take these exercises up to the study-room. There'll be no one there. Don't knock—just open the door and go in."

Kitty took the pile and, resting her chin on it to keep it steady, ran upstairs to the room which was used by the big girls when they were doing private work.

She put the books on the table, and was going out, when she heard something that made her stop dead—a sort of fluttering shuffle, accompanied by a sad, frightened squawk.

She tiptoed up to the empty grate. There was a bird, a dark, shining bird with half-shut eyes and a hurt wing—a starling.

"*Oh!* . . . Oh, don't try to fly away. I won't hurt you. I'll take care of you. Don't—don't! You're making your wing ever so much worse."

She took off her scarf and wrapped it round the bird, and, finding he could not move, he stayed submissively in her hands, though he throbbed as if he were terribly frightened. Softly Kitty ran down the stairs.

"Look, Miss Francis! He's fallen down the chimney and hurt himself. What a good thing there wasn't a fire! May I take him home and nurse him till he gets well? Oh, *may* I?"

"I'll get you a little cage to carry him in. There's one somewhere in my room," said Miss Francis. "Poor thing! Don't handle him more than you can help. I don't know why they will get down chimneys. There was one dead in that room the other day."

"This one isn't going to die," said Kitty.

And he didn't. He languished for a little, and then recovered his jaunty spirits. His broken wing did not quite mend, but it grew well enough not to hurt him, and he seemed to enjoy himself in the wired-off space Kitty provided for him in the garden. The purple and green of his plumage gleamed far more beautifully than that of the stuffed starling; and, if she was very gentle and quick, he would let Kitty touch his back and his head.

"He's a lovely bird. What's his name?" said Flora.

"Bolt, because he came like a bolt from the blue," said Kitty.

"I believe he came on purpose," said Flora. "I believe he knew you wanted a bird very badly, and just came because you didn't get the stuffed one."

"Oh, Flora! As if he would throw himself down a chimney and hurt his wing!"

"He risked it. P'r'aps he knew you'd take care of him—you're good at taking care of people."

Kitty laughed; but she thought it was nice of Flora to say that. And, although she was to have a great many pets in her life, she never had one she liked better than her darling starling, Bolt.

Montague's Maiden Aunt

by Ethel Talbot

IT all happened on account of Montague's maiden-aunt.

Most chaps have maiden-aunts, I dare say. As a matter of fact, I've got a couple of aunts myself. About most chaps' aunts, however, other chaps never hear; but things were different with Montague. I knew about his maiden-aunt for two reasons—one of them being the fact that I'm his best chum. The other reason was, that he'd literally arrived at Chad's labelled with her, if you understand what I mean.

For, as a matter of fact, Matron, feeling incensed no doubt and one can hardly blame her, at receiving two letters of advice from Montague's aunt by the same post on the first day of term—had fairly let fly at Montague in the crowded cloakroom as soon as the poor chap arrived. She had read bits of them aloud, too, which was hardly sporting; she had likewise flourished the envelope upon which Montague's aunt had written in a once-seen-always-remembered hand. It was little wonder that other chaps beside myself remembered the episode; it was little wonder also that when the post arrived every chap seemed inclined to inquire in chorus whether there was a letter for Montague from his aunt.

"And there pretty nearly always is, of course," sighed good old Montague; "and I can't stop them, for she means so jolly well."

That was one way of looking at it, certainly; but I could not help feeling, as I told the chap, that Montague had let politeness run to extremes.

"No," said Montague to me. "When the pater comes back from India and I can spend the hols with him—why, then, it will be absolutely easy to bear with it. In term-time, really, I can stand it, for truthfully, she means so well, and letters one can always lay on one side after a first reading. It's in the holidays——"

Montague stopped. Only to me, his best chum, as I said before, would he have ventured even on to half a sentence of protest against his maiden-aunt.

"Ah!" said I.

But I thought the more, for Montague was gradually growing depressed. In most cases the spirits of chaps rise, like any barometer after a storm, towards the end of term. It was nearing the end of term at that moment, and most of us were as keen as mustard on the weeks ahead. Not so Montague; his spirits sank slowly but surely. It was his holidays with his maiden-aunt which loomed ahead like a momentous cloud.

"I say, old chap," I remarked during the last week of term: "to literally call a spade a spade, you know, which often relieves a trouble—couldn't you twig on something or other to do, you know, during the hols which would fairly take you out of range of her? Crag-climbing, or even——"

"Old chap," said Montague, "no." Then he proceeded to explain.

It appeared that his maiden-aunt was an invalid; likewise as old as the hills, or very near. Added to that, although Montague's spirits sank to zero as the holidays

approached, not so with his aunt's. They appeared to mount like the mercury in a clinical thermometer when a chap's got flu. She appeared to count the days till his return.

"And she *means* so well!" finished up Montague.

"Stow that refrain of yours, old man," says I, "and we'll think it out. What does she want you to do for her, eh?"

"Do? Nothing," says Montague; "she's a real good sort. Feeds me like a fighting-cock, for one thing; and means me to enjoy myself prime. But a chap does get a bit fed up with reading aloud, you know, by the hour; and, also, hearing bits read aloud. If I was a girl, perhaps it wouldn't be so bad," added he, "because perhaps I could fiddle about with a bit of sewing like they do." I need say no more of my conversation with Montague: the above last remark of his will show you to what a pitch of melancholy the poor chap had sunk.

Needless to add, however, I decided that something must be done and done quickly; when, therefore, a notice appeared on the common-room board, signed by Hurst, the captain, and stating that owing to the retiral of Brookes, the Editor of the Lower School Mag, the post of Lower School Mag Editor was open for election, I felt that here was the thing.

"Apply, old chap," says I. "You've got all the qualifications. It's a job that needs plenty of time, which is one reason why most chaps funk it; but you could get through all there is to do during your hols. And it would be a fine reason for occasional retiral to your own dug-out, you see, which surely your aunt—being a bit of a writer herself—would understand."

It *was* a bit of a notion. Montague cottoned on with gratitude. Hurst, also recognizing in Montague the very chap for the job, accepted his application; which, as a matter of fact, was the only one. Other fellows, you see, being no end busy with ploys of their own, and though being willing to read the Mag and pay an occasional subscription, were *not* feeling inclined, as a general rule, to go further into the matter.

Not so Montague; he flung himself into the scheme like a tiger. "Hurst's told me," said he, "that it's not a paying concern. Well, but it's going to be. A fine cover—that's always an attraction, eh? A few extra pages; chaps like to get their moneys' worth! There's two pounds odd left, so Hurst says; in fact he's handed it over to me. Well, then——" He fixed a notice on the board that he would shortly be issuing a Star Number; and, that being the case, most chaps paid him for 'em in advance out of their train money, the last day of term having arrived.

With it, naturally, arrived the first day of the hols; and, to my relief, Montague, having a second string to his bow—in the shape of the Mag as well as his aunt—disappeared likewise cheerily enough. His first letter to me came as a disappointment, I must own.

Not from what he said; the chap was a sport always; but from the gloom that seemed to encircle the chap's letter, which, likewise, ran to a length which no other chap's letters ever did. Also, likewise, he reiterated seven times during its length that his aunt "meant" jolly well. Well, I ask you what would *you* have made of that? The same as I did, I rather think—that Montague was not cheerier this hols—in spite of the Mag prospects—than he had been this time last year.

I waited anxiously until the term began. When Montague met me—he always came up by the first train—I could see that there were ton weights on his chest which he longed without a moment's respite to disgorge.

"I say, what about the Mag?" says I, tactfully refraining—as every other chap had *not* done—from mentioning his aunt.

"It's a dud," said Montague with almost a sob.

"A dud!" said I comfortingly. "It's always been *that!* The Senior Mag now *is* a feature; but the Lower School Mag's never been anything else but a joke. Better take it as that, old man; it couldn't be worse than it has been, eh?"

But Montague, in a half-whisper which I could hardly catch, was heard by me to declare that it could; and, what was more, that it *would* be worse than ever before.

"How?" inquired I, naturally staring. I stared rather more when I heard his reply.

"She means so well," said Montague. Then, poor chap, evidently feeling that it was a case of do or die—me always being his best chum—he outed with his tale.

"It began well, your scheme," said Montague. "We had quite a decent first evening, and talked of the Mag all the while. I told her, you see, of the two pounds odd,

and I wrote a letter or two to the printers. and arranged it all, and paid up the cash. It was then," sighed Montague, "that I realized that thus I'd burned my boats, and that I'd spent every farthing I'd got. And that I'd have to write the whole thing myself."

"Well?" said I, not understanding what the chap was at, "and didn't you? I tell you, it would have filled your whole hols; why on earth not?"

"She meant so well," sighed Montague; "and—well, it began little by little. I told her, you see, how things stood. It interested her. And—well, there was a tour she once took, you know, in Sweden; fifty years ago, I think," sighed Montague; "and a poem she wrote. It took three days to find, and was tied up with ribbon. And then she used to sketch or etch, or something; and she said——"

"Well, but what's that to do with the Mag?" inquired I.

"She's contributing 'em, don't you see?" said Montague.

I must say I stood perfectly still and stared at the chap. An onion-head, that's what *he* was; and I told him so.

"But——" yelled I. "You jolly well can't put 'em in. Tell her the Mag's full; tell her that it's fizzled out; tell her——"

I suppose I'd forgotten old Montague a bit during the hols; but I soon remembered him all right again when he barged out at me, as he did. He wasn't going to tell any rotten crams, he said. He'd already told her—as all chaps know—that relatives did occasionally write bits for the Mag; and that the Mag was jolly empty; and that it was jolly poor. "Naturally," finished up poor old Montague, "since you're my chum I'll own that I told her those facts just because I'd never twigged for an instant what she'd suggest. But—I'm not going to back out of it, now. So there!"

"I pity the chaps," said I, "who read your Mag." But I pitied Montague more. "Where's the tosh?" asked I. But Montague pretended not to understand. Having decided to go through with the matter, he'd decided to stick up for his aunt: and I had to ask him twice over before he'd even tell me another word.

"I say, where's the—er—manuscript, old chap?" I said at last.

There followed then the reading of the letters by Montague and me.

Other chaps may have read stuff like that; other chaps may have revelled in it; but, as a matter of fact, it had never come my way. There wasn't an ounce of happening in the whole of it; scenery, that's what it was; and how it had made Monta-

"Your aunt, I understand, went on these travels?"

gue's aunt feel. We read it through, every word; and we felt quite dazed with it.

"You can't possibly stick 'em in, old chap," said I. "You just *can't*."

"I'm not going back on her," said old Montague, setting his jaw.

"Help!" said I.

Help was the ticket, too. We couldn't do without it. Help we'd got to have; and I could well see that Montague was far beyond helping himself; so I'd got to help him. I'd a few thoughts of having a midnight fire, and destroying the—er—manuscript, but I decided that that would be a bit low down. It wasn't till I was in bed that the idea struck me which might well have struck me before, only, as matters turn out sometimes, it hadn't.

Hurst!

Hurst is the captain. Likewise the editor of the Senior School Mag, which holds a position bar none among Public School mags of distinction. Well, anyway, he'd had the electing of Montague, and I decided that he should do the censoring. "I say, old chap," said I to Montague;

"it occurs to me that you'd better lay your first issue—before sending it to the printers, you know—before Hurst. Not that I've ever run the Junior Mag, old chap; but it seems to me that it might be against etiquette not to."

"Think so?" said Montague.

Not twigging my meaning, of course. If he'd thought that I'd spent a sleepless hour wondering how to get him out of the hole he was safely steering to, he'd have knocked me down. Off he went to Hurst that very afternoon. I was with him (it took two of us to carry the letters), and Hurst was jolly decent.

"Eh?" said he. "Like me to look over your first number before publication, eh? Well, that's quite a good and professional notion! You mean to rival the Senior Mag, I see. Leave it here!" He pointed to a table covered with shoes, and I noticed that Montague carefully cleared a place before he laid down his aunt's letters. Then, having left them there, he and I departed, and I must say I felt more light-hearted than I had felt since the beginning of the term.

"Trust Hurst——" says I, wondering whether he'd drop a match on 'em by mistake, or what he'd do. Hurst is a fine chap; and thinks a lot of the welfare of Chad's, Junior and Senior Schools both.

I wasn't surprised, therefore, when two days later, as we were coming in from footer, one of the fags raced up. "Montague, you and Rivers are wanted by Hurst," says he; "and you're to look sharp."

"Ah!" says I to Montague; "the Mag." I must say I felt as though I was conducting the poor chap to the guillotine, but conducted he had to be. Both of us were a bit breathless from miscellaneous reasons by the time we reached the captain's study.

"You two," says he, looking up from an immense tome of a book. "Well, wait a moment; I've something to say to you." He pointed at a space by his elbow, where lay, yes, to a letter, the whole heap of Montague's aunt's Swedish travel notes. "Montague, did I understand you to say that these letters were for publication?"

"Yes, Hurst. She means——" began poor old Montague with his usual gadget, but I poked his elbow and he refrained from finishing it.

"Your aunt, I understand," said Hurst, 'went on these travels?"

"Yes, Hurst," said poor old Montague, looking at his toes. I looked at mine, too, to cheer him up.

"And she wrote these letters?"

"Yes, Hurst," says poor old Montague, looking as though he might perhaps be run in for possessing them.

"Well, then——" Hurst stood up. "I have the pleasure of informing you, young un, that—you're in luck's way!"

We both stood as still as dormice. As for me, I wondered for an instant whether the reading of Montague's aunt's letters might not have sent Hurst raving mad; but it appeared that he was genuinely excited.

"Of course you meant to take advantage of your incredible luck," said Hurst; "but as a matter of fact," continued he, looking a bit constrained, "I'd like to put a bit of a proposition before you, myself, young un, first. These letters"—Hurst laid his hand upon the heap—"are just exactly the kind of thing that I want for the Senior Mag. Travels, you know, round about half a century ago. A bit lengthy, perhaps; but the style's *it!* She's got colour and atmosphere; and—well, she can write! Ever published, has she?" He turned to stare at Montague. "Well, if not, I'm surprised. As a matter of fact, they'd be thrown away on the Junior Mag; none of your chaps would appreciate 'em; but the Senior Mag, which has a wide circulation and goes the round of the Public Schools, well—there'd be a public for them *there.* So"—Hurst looked down at Montague—"if I write to your aunt and suggest that extracts from 'em should appear in the Senior Mag—she might let me take out the bits I want—would you agree, as Editor of the Junior Mag, to swap 'em for a fairly good set of humorous articles on games which I've got by me for future use, but which aren't in the same street with these?"

Hurst looked gravely at Montague.

Well, to tell the truth, if you told me that the world had turned upside down, I'd have agreed.

It hadn't, though. The Swedish articles are running in the Senior Mag now; and the Junior Mag's going strong, with the backing that it's got from Hurst's articles on games. Wonders will never cease, eh? Ah! I thought you'd think so; but the funniest wonder is, perhaps, that Montague's aunt hasn't written to Montague more than once in a fortnight all this term. She is absolutely taken up with writing to Hurst over the next set of her articles which is to appear shortly in the Senior Mag.

THE OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED UNDER A HILL

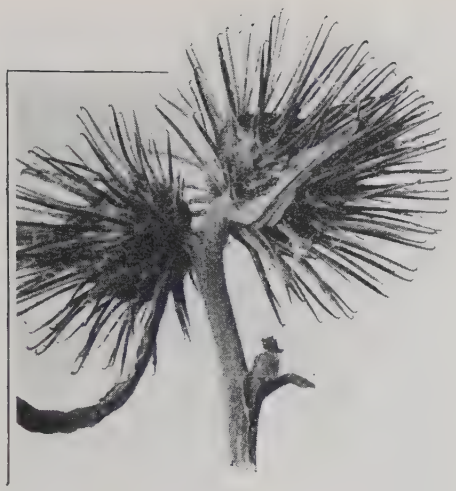
(Drawn by Florence Mary Anderson)

A SUNNY DAY AT BEXHILL

Out on the Veranda

VISITING DAY

The Chairman of the Little Folks Home Committee, with the Secretary, the Editor, Sister-in-Charge, and some friends with fifteen little holiday patients



Hooked seeds of the Burdock

Photo:
Mrs. M. H. Crawford

Little Folks Nature Club

Conducted by "Squirrel"

IT is quite easy to be interested in wild flowers, because their beautiful forms and colours attract and please us, but it is not so easy to be interested in the plants when the summer blossoms are withered.

Yet plants are interesting all the year round, and especially at this season, for now we can see something of the care they take to start their babies on a successful career. But now that the coloured petals have vanished we have to look more carefully for what we want to find.

Rambling in Search of Seeds

So if you were careful during the summer to notice the leaves and stalks of plants as well as the blossoms, you will find your knowledge of those parts useful when you are rambling in search of seeds.

There are some kinds of seeds about which you cannot help knowing something, even without looking for them. If you leave the hard road and take to the field or wood paths, or if you only climb on a roadside bank to look at something or pluck a flower, you are almost sure to find when you get home that a number of little balls are clinging to your clothes. You try to brush them off and you can't. They stick as if they were glued to the material, and you have to pick them off one by one.

Then if you examine them you will see that they have not a sticky surface, but that they are armed with a large number of tiny hooks. These hooks become entangled in the wool of our clothes, and the balls to which they belong are thus often carried long distances from where they were grown.

Now these balls contain the seeds of the plants on which they grow, so at first sight it would seem as if by carrying them away we were doing a disservice to those plants. We think very naturally that a plant which grows up, blossoms, and forms and ripens seeds, will want those seeds to fall to the ground and remain there till at the call of next spring they may open and send out roots and shoots.

But, strange to tell, we are doing just what the plants intended us to do. They want their seeds to be scattered far and wide so that they will not all grow up in a crowd and smother each other. So the cases containing the seeds are provided with those tiny hooks in order that they may catch in the fur of any animal that brushes past and be carried about by it and dropped in some new place where they may have a good chance of starting life successfully.

Hooked Seed-boxes

The commonest of all these hooked seed-boxes is that of cleavers, or goose grass. This plant grows in the hedgerows everywhere, often in great masses, and climbs up high by means of the hundreds of tiny hooks with which its stems and leaves are covered. So the hooks on its seed-cases are not a special invention, but are just such as the plant already uses for this other purpose.

Apart from its hooks you may recognize

cleavers by its small narrow leaves, which are grown in circles (or whorls, as they are called) of six or eight. Its seed-cases are double, like two small peas stuck together, and they are covered all over with hooks.

Another hooked seed-case that you will often find on your clothes is that of the agrimony. It has hooks only round the top, and the plant has no hooks on any other part. So here we have a plant that has invented hooks for a special purpose.

The Agrimony

The agrimony is a member of the rose family. It grows its small yellow flowers round a long stalk, but each has a tiny stalk of its own. When the flowers are in bloom their little stalklets are erect, but when the seeds are set they droop, and that is how you will find them now. Most of the other members of the rose family combine their seeds with fruits which are eaten by birds or other creatures, but the agrimony has been original and has struck out on lines of its own.

The burdock gets its name from the fact that its seed-cases are hooked. They are burs. This is a tall plant with large leaves like rhubarb, and some people think it is wild rhubarb. But it belongs to the daisy family, as you may see by its flowers. These are tiny purple florets grouped together on a single head like those of a thistle. The cup in which they are supported is also like that of the thistle, round and hard and composed of a number of tiny leaflets or bracts. But instead of being armed with a spine, as in the thistle, each of these leaflets bears a hook.

Showing the down attached to the seed of the Thistle-down

Photo: Mrs. M. H. Crawford

So the burdock is also an original member of its family. Most of its cousins send their seeds off on their adventures on little parachutes.

Balanced seeds of the Dandelion, showing their umbrellas of fine white down

Photo: Mrs. M. H. Crawford

Means of Seed-scattering

The strangest part of these hooked seeds is this. Once upon a time there were no woolly animals or people with clothes, so in those days the hooks would have been useless, and the plants must therefore have distributed their seeds by some other means. We can only think that the hooks were developed later to take advantage of the wanderings of woolly animals, and it is astonishing to think that plants like cleavers and burdock have scattered themselves over whole continents by this means alone.

The little downy parachutes of the daisy family are a very wonderful invention. It is just the kind of thing a human inventor would think of if he were set the problem that every plant has to face, namely, how to distribute its seeds to the best advantage.

He would think of all the different forces by which seeds might be carried—wandering animals, birds that never remain long in one spot, wind that is constantly blowing in one direction or another, water that is always in motion—and he would invent devices by which they could be made to serve his purpose. Now if you examine plants at seed time you will find that they have done all this for themselves.

It is easy for tall trees to make use of the wind, because when their branches are being blown about any seed that breaks away from them will be thrown to a distance. And even on calm days a seed that has been given a wing will not just drop straight to the ground.

The Dandelion's Method

But lowly plants like the daisy and the dandelion have a difficulty to overcome. Their seeds must be lifted into the air and wafted away on the breeze. The seeds of the daisy are so small and light that they are blown about like chaff, but the dandelion seeds are larger and heavier, and could never travel by air without help.

So its point has been drawn out into a long beak, and on the tip of this has been placed a beautiful little umbrella of fine white down. This umbrella is so light, and yet so strong, that when the wind blows it sails up into the air, bearing the heavy seed with it. Everyone knows this who has played with dandelion clocks.

The goat's-beard, or John-go-to-bed-at-noon, which is a cousin of the dandelion, also gets a round ball of downy umbrellas at seed time, but it is not such a beautiful one as the dandelion's. It is also very much larger, and if you examine the plant you will find that there is a very good reason for this.

Rather like a Shuttlecock

The seeds are big, so there is room on the head for only a few of them, and also they require much larger and stronger umbrellas to carry them. So instead of the downy tops being just a bunch of simple hairs, it consists of only a few long hairs, each of which is feathered, and these feathers are arranged very much after the manner of a shuttlecock.

The thistles also have large seeds and provide them with downy carriers, but instead of the hairs being arranged on a stalk in the form of an umbrella they are attached direct to the seed itself. Most of the commonest species of thistle have feathered down, but in several species the hairs are simple.

Other Interesting Differences

There are other interesting differences to be looked for in this very interesting family. For example, the common hawkbit, which grows on lawns and roadside wastes, has umbrellas composed of a number of long hairs with a ring of short hairs in between them. That is one of the signs by which you may recognize the plant.

The lesser hawkbit has a similar arrangement, but the outer ring of seeds are without down altogether and in its place have only a few short scales. Another fairly common member of the family is the smooth cat's-ear, which has feathered down. All its umbrellas have handles, except those on the outer ring, and they are just attached to the tip of the seed.

Seed-cases of Poppies, showing the little door at the top of each section of the case *Photo: Mrs. M. H. Crawford*

The Seed-cases of the Poppy

The common poppy has another way of making use of the wind. Of course those that grow in the cornfields have long since

been cut down and carted away with the sheaves; but many also grow on the edges of the fields and on wastes, and there you will now find their withered stalks and seed-cases.

These cases are divided into eight sections each of which contains a larger number of tiny black seeds. At the top of each section there is a little door which opens in dry weather and closes in wet. When the wind blows it shakes the stalk and the ripe seeds soon rattle loose inside their case. Then one dry day a sudden gust jerks the stalk and the seeds are shot out through the little door and may travel several feet before they drop to the ground.

The harebell, which grows on heaths, has a similar method of scattering its seeds, only its little doors are at the bottom instead of at the top of its seed-cases. Now you can easily see that if the doors of the poppy were so placed the seeds would drop out and fall to the ground in a crowd instead of being scattered far and wide.

A Clever Arrangement

So you might think that the harebell's plan was a very stupid one. But you will never think so if you go and look at the harebell for yourself. You will find that as the blossom droops, the tip of the seed-case is lower than the base, so the doors are really at the top, though they are actually at the bottom. The stem must therefore be shaken violently before the seeds can be thrown out, and that of course means that they will always be shot some distance away.

Now, though all this is very wonderful, it does not by any means exhaust the inventiveness of Nature. There are other forces that can be used to distribute seeds, and she has found them out and, just as the human inventor would do, has made marvellous devices by which she can take advantage of them.

The Common Violet

If you take a round bead between your thumb and forefinger and squeeze it hard it will suddenly shoot out and fly across the room. That is how the common violet scatters its seeds. If you look where violets grow in spring you may find the seed-cases now, or, at any rate, a number of empty ones.

When the seeds are ripe the cases split into three sections which spread themselves out like little boats attached to one port, each carrying several seeds. Then, as they dry, their sides contract and squeeze the seeds as your fingers squeeze the bead and with similar result.

The common hairy bittercress, which you will find in any kitchen garden or allotment, grows its seeds in little pods. When they are ripe the pods dry and become tighter and tighter on the outside till all of a sudden they split in two, each half rolling up like a watch spring, and the seeds at the same time being shot out by the explosion.

The pods of the common vetch and other members of the pea family also explode, but instead of winding up the two halves twist themselves like a corkscrew.

The Wonderful Herb Robert

More wonderful still is the spring gun of the common herb robert, which grows on every roadside. When this flower withers it droops, and as the seeds form, a long sharp point like a bird's bill grows out from the middle of it. When the seeds ripen it becomes erect again and the cup opens out, and there are three fine seeds grouped round the foot of the bill. Presently the skin of the bill splits into five strips. Each strip is attached to the little box which contains a seed. As it dries it becomes tighter and tighter till suddenly it flies out like a released spring and throws the seed in its little box many feet away.

And now I wish you to note that these wonderful plants are not foreigners kept in greenhouses, but are just the common weeds of the countryside, as can be easily found in an afternoon's ramble.

If you would like to become a member of Little Folks' Nature Club, send a penny stamp to "Squirrel," "Little Folks" Office, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.4.

Winning her Colours

By CHRISTINE CHAUNDLER

CHAPTER XIII

In Disgrace Again

"GOOD heavens! She's done it now!" cried Rita in horrified alarm. "Here, we'd better clear out of this, quick! Come along!"

She scrambled over the rails and slid down the pillar, and her friends followed suit. As the last of them reached the ground an electric alarum bell within the Sanatorium began to ring loudly. Lights appeared in the windows and there was a sound of many voices and the hurrying to and fro of footsteps.

"I say! What are we going to do now?" asked Susie in a scared whisper as the party of five, having scuttled across the lawn, drew together in the shadow afforded by the high wall.

"Get back to school at once," gasped Lucy, her teeth chattering with fright. "Perhaps, if we're very q-q-quick, we'll get in before anyone finds out it's us."

Pip gave a little snort of contempt.

"What! And let Sister and Nurse think it's a real fire, and have them dragging the girls out into the cold—and some of them with temperatures ever so high? That *would* be a cowardly thing to do! Why, some of them might *die* if they were taken out-of-doors on a cold night like this. I'm going right away to the San., now this minute, to tell Sister Isabel that it's a false alarm. It's the only thing we can do."

"Yes, of course it is! And I'm coming with you," said Aileen bravely, and Susie and Rita echoed her determination.

"Come on, then! We must hurry, or they'll start carrying people out," Pip urged. And she and Susie and Rita and Aileen tore back at top speed to the Sanatorium, followed more slowly by Lucy, who knew that it was no use for her to try to keep out of the row, since the others insisted upon plunging into it, but who wished most heartily now that she had braved the jeers of Four B, and had not sacrificed herself upon the altar of friendship.

As a matter of fact, neither Sister Isabel nor Nurse Agnes was very much disturbed when they heard the ringing of the fire-bell. Barely a quarter of an hour had elapsed since they had made their rounds and assured themselves that everything was as it should be. Moreover, although the outside bell was there in case of emergency, it was intended chiefly for their own use, that they might themselves summon aid from the school in case of fire, in the improbable event of the telephone being out of order. It was very unlikely indeed that anyone else should ring it—unless it was being rung for a practical joke.

That, indeed, was what both nurses thought had happened. And though they were very annoyed and angry, and though they both set out at once on another round

of the wards to see what was wrong, neither of them was in the least inclined to start moving any of the patients—with temperatures or otherwise—out into the cold.

So Pip and her friends might have fled and saved themselves without fear of any serious consequences to their sick comrades weighing upon their minds. But it did not occur to any of the culprits that the Sanatorium authorities would take such a sane and sensible view of the situation. They pictured them rushing here and there in a wild state of panic, carrying prostrate patients out-of-doors on stretchers and setting them down upon the damp ground in this cold, mid-November night. And full of the heroic resolve to sacrifice themselves rather than allow the influenza patients to suffer, the scapegrace members of Four B burst through the Sanatorium door and rushed pell-mell into the first ward to which they came.

"It's all right! There isn't a fire. It was an accident. It was us who rang the bell by mistake," Pip cried as she dashed into the long room, where the patients, not by any means so overwhelmed with fright as Pip had expected to find them, were sitting up in bed, speculating excitedly as to the meaning of all this ringing of bells. Neither of the nurses was in this ward, however, and Pip turned back, disregarding the entreaties of the girls who had recognized her to "Come and tell us what it's all about, Pip!"

"Sister's not there. I expect she's upstairs," she said breathlessly to her friends, who were following closely at her heels; and the party tore up the flight of stairs in search of one of the nurses.

They encountered both of them at the top of the flight, and without waiting for them to express their astonishment, Pip poured out the confession.

"Sister, we're most frightfully sorry! It wasn't the fire-bell, it was us. At least, it was the fire-bell, of course, but there isn't a fire. It was us who rang it by accident. We never meant to do it, and we're most fearfully sorry, but it's quite all right, really. You needn't move a single person out-of-doors."

"I have no intention of moving anyone out-of-doors—unless it is you," said Sister Isabel. "What are you children doing here? How dare you come into the Sanatorium! What are you doing out of school at all at this hour of the night?"

None of the adventurers answered, and Sister moved towards them, turning, however, to speak to Nurse Agnes first.

"Go and stop that electric alarm, Nurse! It's the one in Ward C. Some silly child is frightened, I expect. And then go round and quiet the girls while I take these children down to the office and find out what in the world they are doing here. Better go to little Moira Hill first, I think. She's more likely to be scared than anyone."

"Yes, Sister. But hadn't we better 'phone across to the school to tell them that we are all right? They may have heard the bell and think that it really is a fire," Nurse Agnes said.

"I'll ring them up from the office," replied Sister. But she was spared the trouble of doing that. The clang of the fire-bell had been heard by the mistresses as they were having dinner in the staff dining-hall, and, headed by Miss Druce, they had left their meal unfinished and had hurried across to the Sanatorium to assist in removing the patients.

"What is the matter, Sister? Is it a fire? Have you rung up the brigade?" said Miss Druce breathlessly as she came through the Sanatorium door. Sister Isabel came to meet her, holding up a calming hand.

"There was no need to call up the brigade. There is nothing the matter at all, Miss Druce—except naughtiness! It seems that it was these children who rang the bell. I was just going to ring you up to tell you that it was all right before I cross-examined them."

"Philippa! Rita! Susie!—what are you doing here?" exclaimed the Head as she caught sight of the five girls, huddled together in a scared group half-way up the stairs. And then indeed, as Pip said afterwards, the fat *was* in the fire!

It was dreadful—the inquisition that took place in Sister Isabel's office, with Sister and Miss Druce relentless in their cross-examination, the latter more stern and terrible than any of the delinquents had ever seen her before. The five made a clean breast of the matter. There was nothing else to be done! And the headmistress listened in shocked surprise to the tale of the projected visit to Moira Hill and the manner in which it had failed. The only thing the culprits did not disclose was the reason for that visit. It was not necessary to give any explanation, they

found. Both Sister Isabel and Miss Druce seemed to take it for granted that it was merely a good-bye visit, conceived and carried out in a spirit of thoughtless naughtiness. And it seemed to Pip and Susie and Rita, who bore the brunt of the inquisition—Aileen being too scared to say very much, and Lucy, who had long ago succumbed to tears, being in too sniffing and sobbing a condition to say anything coherent at all—that it was hardly fair to Sheila to give away the S.O.S. and the object of its being.

"It was a very fortunate thing that you did not succeed in getting through the window to Moira," Miss Druce said severely, when she had elicited everything that the five thought it necessary to tell. "Moira has been very ill indeed, and the illness has left her in a very weak and nervous condition. If you had appeared suddenly at her window, you might have given her a terrible fright and have caused some serious injury to her health. I should like to speak to you outside for a moment, Sister. Miss Kent, will you stay here with these very naughty children and see that they do not speak to one another? I wish them to observe complete silence while I am gone."

The Head and Sister Isabel, and the other members of the staff who were present, went out of the room, leaving Miss Kent in charge of the prisoners. And there for ten or twelve minutes the culprits had to stand in solemn silence, broken only by Lucy's sobs and sniffs, with not even the comfort of conversation to relieve the dreadful suspense which gripped them all.

It seemed hours before the headmistress at last came back into the room, with Sister following close behind her.

"I have decided upon your punishment," Miss Druce said. "Since you yourselves have elected to come to the Sanatorium, we are going to gratify your wish and keep you here. In any case, it would not be safe for you to return to your schoolfellows until all risk of your having contracted influenza shall have passed. You will be put into one of the observation wards, and there you will remain for a week, partly as a punishment, and partly that you may not carry infection back to the school. Do not imagine, however, that this will be a holiday for you. It will not. I intend that you shall work very much harder than usual during your sojourn here. You will be allowed no games or story-books, but Miss Kent shall send you over your lesson books, and she will set you sufficient work to do to occupy your time. Now, please, go with Sister. She will take you to the ward in which you are to sleep. I will send your night-things over from the school very shortly."

The five, four of them in dead silence, and the fifth sobbing noisily, followed Sister to the empty observation ward which the ward-maids were hastily making ready for their reception. They were too overwhelmed by the awfulness of the catastrophe which had fallen upon them to say very much to each other, even though Sister, having ushered them into the room, left them alone there without telling them that they were not to speak. They sat on the beds allotted to them and stared miserably at each other until their night-things arrived from the school, and then they undressed and crept into bed feeling too utterly cast-down for words. Only when Sister had turned out the lights, and, after telling them that they would be called at seven o'clock the next morning, had left them to their isolation, did any of them say a word. Then Rita called softly across to Pip who was in bed on the other side of the room.

"Pip, what about your Colours? When's the Halton match? Will we be out in time for you to play in it if you don't get flu?"

"The match isn't till Saturday week. But—a whole week of missed practices! Miss Parr will never stand for it. I guess this has just about done in my chances of winning my Colours this time," said Pip with a gulp. And she turned over in bed, buried her face in the pillow, and pulled the bed-clothes over her head.

If she did want to cry a little in the darkness, none of the others should know about it. She wasn't going to blazon her grief abroad like Lucy—she told herself fiercely.

CHAPTER XIV

The Last Chance

BUT, after all, Pip was to be allowed to play in the Second Eleven Hockey match. She was to be given one more chance to qualify for her Colours. When at last that long week of quarantine was over—to the prisoners it seemed almost as

though their sojourn in the Sanatorium ward had lasted for seven months, not merely seven days—and five relieved, though rather shamefaced, people returned to school, none of them having succumbed to influenza, the very first person they met was the games mistress of St. Cecilia's.

Miss Parr stopped when she saw Pip.

"So you are back again," she remarked. "Well, you are just in time for the match and only just. Your place has been kept open for you, though I'm not quite sure that you deserve that it should have been! There is a practice arranged for to-morrow afternoon, Second Eleven against the First. It will be the last practice before the match. Mind you turn up in good time for it, Philippa. It is very annoying that you should have missed so many practices this week, and it is *very* essential that you should be present to-morrow afternoon. Should you fail again, I shall take you out of the team and put Edith Hart in your place without any hesitation. Mind now, Philippa! I really mean it this time. I shall not relent again—even if every senior in St. Cecilia's comes to intercede for you." And she passed on, leaving Pip staring after her in wide-eyed surprise.

"Did you hear that? Then—then I'm still in the team!" Pip gasped, too overwhelmed with delight to express her joy in any appropriate manner. She and her friends had been kept very strictly isolated during their week in the Sanatorium. Except for a two-hour walk each afternoon with one of the junior mistresses, they had not stirred out of the Sanatorium grounds. They had seen none of their schoolfellows and had heard none of the school news—Sister and Nurse being icily rigid in their refusal to impart any gossip. But all five of them had taken it for granted that Pip would be turned out of the Second Hockey team, and the other four were as amazed and almost as delighted as Pip was, at Miss Parr's words.

"What on earth did she mean, though, by saying that about the seniors?" Susie asked in a puzzled way.

They found out when they reached the Lower Fourth sitting-room, where the rest of the form was gathered waiting for the bell to ring for evening prayer. (Miss Druce had kept her word with the utmost faithfulness. The culprits were not released from the Sanatorium until the evening of the seventh day—at the very hour at which they had forced their way in.) When the first excited greetings were over, Pip broached the subject of the Second Eleven match, and the members of Four B proceeded to enlighten her.

"Yes, you're playing still. And it was us who did it!" they told her triumphantly.

"Us and Meg," supplemented Phyllis. "We heard what had happened after prayers that night, and we were all frightfully upset about it. Marie Felton told us, and she was horribly cock-a-hoop. She said that everyone knew that Miss Parr wasn't going to play you if you missed any more practices, and that all the Middle Fourth were wild with joy because now they were sure that Edith Hart would be put in. And we talked it over in Four B, and we knew how awfully sick you'd be, and we thought as it was so fearfully important you wouldn't mind. So we went and collared Meg and made her listen to us. We told her why it was you'd tried to get into the San.; and though she jawed us no end and said it was frightful cheek of us to go nosing into Sheila's affairs, we could see that she felt rather touched—sort of moved at your devotion to Sheila, you know. And we reminded her of how you'd saved Sheila's life, so that it was only natural that you should take an interest in her, and in the end she promised that she'd see what she could do. And she went right away to Miss Parr, and was with her ever such a long time, and when she did come out she wouldn't tell us anything. But last night, the Banker put up the list of players, and you were down as right-inside. So then we knew that it was all right, and we went and sang 'God Save the King' outside the Middle Fourth's door."

"How jolly decent of Meg," said Susie.

"Yes! And jolly decent of you others, too," said Pip warmly. "It was ripping of you to risk another snubbing from Meg just for me."

"Oh, that's all right. We wanted you to play," Phyllis said. "We all felt we'd rather risk a snubbing from Meg than have that Edith Hart take your place. You don't mind our having told Meg why you went to the San., then? We were rather afraid you would."

"I don't mind as long as you didn't tell her too much," replied Pip. "She's Sheila's friend, and I expect she knows that Sheila's miserable just as well as we do. It wasn't like telling one of the other

seniors who mightn't have known. I'm very glad you did tell her, since it's given me another chance to play in the match.

"Mind you come up to scratch on Saturday," Four B entreated her. "Don't go getting flu or anything. And oh, Pip, for goodness' sake *don't* go missing the practice to-morrow, will you!"

"Rather not," Pip promised gaily. "And now tell me, someone, what about Sheila? Who's been fagging for her while I've been away?"

"I have," said Phyllis. "Only till you came back, of course."

"Thanks very much for doing it," said Pip. "I'll take her on again to-morrow morning. What is there to be done in the morning? You might as well tell me now, then I'll know."

"'Philippa! Rita! Susie! —what are you doing here?'" (p. 304)

Phyllis duly informed her of the various small duties that would have to be performed for Sheila in the morning, and soon after breakfast the next day Pip made her way to Study Number Seven and set to work. The room was empty when she first went into it, and while she waited for her fag-mistress to appear and give her the orders for the day, she began to flick round the furniture with a duster.

While she was flicking, quick steps came down the corridor, and with a perfunctory tap at the door, Meg Harrow burst into the room.

"Sheila! Oh, isn't Sheila here yet?" she asked as she caught sight of Pip. "Where is she, do you know, kid?"

"No, I don't. I'm waiting for her myself," Pip replied. When she spoke, Meg suddenly seemed to become aware of her identity, and the Fifth Form girl came into the room with a friendly smile.

"Hullo! It's the Imp back again, is it?" she remarked.

Pip accepted the epithet with tranquillity.

"Yes, it's me. I say, Meg, thanks most

awfully for what you did—about the match, you know. Four B say you went to Miss Parr and persuaded her to give me another chance. It was frightfully decent of you."

"I flatter myself it was rather," agreed Meg. "I risked the most fearful telling-off, and I wouldn't do it again for a hundred pounds. You'd better make the most of your last chance, Pip—for it *is* your last. I'm certain sure of that! If you miss the practice this afternoon, you'll not play in the match on Saturday. The best excuse under the sun won't save you!"

"I know. Miss Parr told me——" Pip was beginning. Then she stopped suddenly as Sheila came into the study. She had come so quietly that neither Pip nor Meg had heard her until she was actually in the room, and they each gave an exclamation of surprise as they caught sight of her—an exclamation which quickly changed to one of dismay on Meg's part, as she saw her friend's face.

"Sheila! What is it? Oh, you've heard and he won't let you!" she cried in distress.

Sheila was too near tears to speak. In her hand she held a telegram, and she gave it to her chum, and then, without a word, sank into an armchair and buried her face in her hands.

Meg smoothed the crumpled bit of paper and read aloud the words written on it.

"Forbid you to accept" was the curt message. And Meg looked down at her friend in concern.

"Oh, Sheila, what a shame! I am so sorry!" she said. Then, after a pause, she added:

"Is it quite hopeless? Can't you write to him again? Does he understand what an honour it is that you should be picked out from all those hundreds of girls? Write to him once more and explain that it isn't going to interfere with your education in the slightest—that you'll stop on here and just go up two or three times a week to have your lessons, and that you won't become a resident student until the third year. Are you quite sure that he understands all that?"

"Quite sure," said Sheila with a little sob. "He won't hear of my taking it. And—and he's wired to Miss Druce, too—to tell her I'm to leave at the end of this term instead of staying on till the summer."

"Sheila! Oh, no, no! Oh, surely he'd never be mean enough to do that?" cried Meg.

"He doesn't think it is mean. He's always been against my taking up music. He wants me to go into his office, you know, and train for business as soon as I leave school. He's never understood how awfully I love music. That was the chief reason I ever went in for the scholarship. I thought if I could only win it he'd give his consent. But—but it's hopeless. I have got to write and tell the College people that I can't accept the training. Oh dear! And I did work so awfully hard for it, too!"

"You did. It's the rottenest shame that your father won't let you accept it," Meg said indignantly. "If I were you, I'd write to him again and try once more."

"I can't, there's not time. My letter must be posted to-day to the College. It's three days since we heard that I was one of the twelve to be awarded free training, and they asked us to let them know whether I was going to accept the offer by to-morrow at the latest. And, anyway, it wouldn't be any good writing to him again. I've written, and Miss Druce has written, and Miss Clifford—and the only result of it all is that I've got to leave St. Cecilia's two terms earlier than I'd expected," Sheila finished forlornly.

Meg began to pace up and down the little room in fuming anger. And then, for the first time since her friend had come into the study, she remembered Pip's presence. Pip hadn't meant to eavesdrop. But nobody had sent her away, and when once Sheila had begun to speak and she had realized what it was all about, she had forgotten altogether that perhaps the conversation wasn't intended for à fag to hear. She had just stayed still where she was, the duster clutched in her hands, staring with all her eyes and listening with all her ears to what was going on.

"You kid, clear out of it!" Meg ordered, as her glance fell upon the small Fourth Former. "What the dickens do you mean by staying here! Don't you know when you're not wanted? The cheek of you to stand there listening to what we're saying!" And the senior, glad to vent some of her wrath upon somebody, grasped the younger girl by the shoulders and pushed her towards the door.

"It isn't cheek! I'm Sheila's fag—I'm dusting her study," Pip remonstrated indignantly. But she was not as indignant

at Meg's treatment as she would have been at any other time. Her concern at what she had heard overwhelmed almost every other feeling. And she suffered herself to be pushed out of the study and the door to be banged upon her without attempting to retaliate in any sort of way.

She lingered about outside the study door for awhile, hoping that Meg would take her departure, so that she might venture in to finish her morning's work. But when presently Meg did emerge, the Fifth Form girl closed the door behind her with finality.

"You still here, Pip? Well, you may as well clear off. You can't go in again this morning. Sheila wants to write a letter. You'll have to leave the dusting—I dare say it won't make much difference to its appearance if the study does go undusted for once! Promise you won't go in again, there's a good kid! Sheila really doesn't want you to. She's got an important letter to write and she's a bit upset just now."

"Oh, all right. I won't go in if Sheila really doesn't want me," Pip said reluctantly. Then she laid a coaxing hand upon Meg's arm.

"I say, Meg, you might tell me—what's up with Sheila? Is it that she's won that scholarship she went in for last term and now her father won't let her accept it?"

The worst of Meg's wrath appeared to have evaporated. She nodded her head and began to walk down the corridor, side by side with the junior.

"Yes, he's dead against her music. Always has been, as I suppose you heard Sheila say. That's what has been the matter with Sheila these last few weeks—you Lower Fourth kids wanted to know, didn't you? When he came down to see her the other day, she told him about having gone in for the examination, and he put his foot down about it, then. Told her that he wouldn't hear of her accepting a scholarship, even if she won one, and said that she must give up all thoughts of a musical career. Miss Druce and Christabel and I tried to cheer her up. We all thought that if she really did win, he'd be so pleased and proud that he'd change his mind. But Sheila knew him better than we did, and she's been frightfully depressed ever since his visit. He seemed so awfully affectionate after her narrow escape on the line, that she thought it would be a splendid opportunity to broach the subject—thought he'd be so full of gratitude at her being spared to him, and all that, you know, that he wouldn't mind what she did. But he did, and Sheila came back from seeing him off that night in the most dreadful dumps. Even when she heard, a few days ago, that she was one of the first twelve candidates and had won a free training for three years, she wouldn't be cheerful. And she wouldn't let anyone say anything to the rest of the girls about it, because she was almost certain that her father wouldn't consent."

"Will he really take her away from St. Cecilia's at the end of the term?" asked Pip in an awe-struck voice.

"I shouldn't be surprised. He threatened to do it when he was down, and now you see he's wired to Miss Druce that she's to leave. And from what Sheila says I should say he's the sort of man to keep his word!"

"I should say so, too!" said Pip with conviction, as a mental picture of Sheila's father rose before her eyes. He did, indeed, look the sort of man to keep his word—no matter at what cost to himself or other people. And then a sudden thought flashed into Pip's mind.

"I say! Must Sheila write that letter to-day? Couldn't she wait just a day or two—until she's had time to write to him once more?" the small girl asked breathlessly.

Meg shook her head.

"She says it's got to be written to-day. As a matter of fact, she's writing it now. I'd try once more if I were she. Wire or 'phone or something! But I suppose she knows her own business best. My eye! I'm glad my respected parent's not like that! And yet Sheila's father is supposed to be so awfuly devoted to her, too!"

"I think he is," said Pip. "He seemed awfully keen on her that time when he came down to see her. And he's always sending her presents. She's had lots of jolly things from him, just this little while that I've been her fag."

"I know, it's queer," said Meg, wrinkling her face in a frown of perplexity. "I believe Sheila's father cares more for Sheila than my pater cares for the whole lot of us put together—though he's a decent enough old stick in his way. Well, well, parents are queer birds! You have to treat them very firmly from the beginning if you want them to tread in the way that they should go. Sheila has let hers get out of hand, and this is the result. I hope

you'll be warned by her example, kid, and bring your progenitors up to be a credit to you—not stumbling-blocks in the way of your career!"

And having given Pip this sage advice, Meg departed, too concerned with her friend's troubles to notice the rapt expression on the junior's face. For Pip—fortunately perhaps—had neither heard nor heeded her senior's remarks upon the education of parents. Other words than Meg's were ringing in her ears—words which had come from the lips of a tall, grave-faced gentleman who had held her hand in his the while he had extracted a promise from her.

"If there is anything I can do for you, you must promise to let me know. Do not hesitate—whatever you ask I will do it—I will never refuse a request from Sheila's plucky little friend."

CHAPTER XV

Pip's Atonement

"I SHOULD say he's the sort of man to keep his word"—and he had pledged his word to Pip that he would never refuse a request from her if it were within his power to grant it.

Well, the request Pip meant to ask of him would be well within the power of Sheila's father to grant. A double request it was, that he should permit Sheila to accept the music scholarship and allow her to remain on at St. Cecilia's until the end of the school year. He wouldn't like granting it, of course. He would probably be furiously angry with Pip for asking it. He would feel that he had been trapped, and—Pip told herself—would no doubt kick up no end of a shindy before he caved in. But if only Pip remained firm and determined, cave in he would have to, sooner or later—or else break his word.

"What a bother it is, though, that I didn't know sooner so that I could have written to him," Pip thought with a worried frown. "Now it means that I've got to get into no end of a row, for if it's to be any good I shall have to go up to town to-day and speak to him myself. And as I'll have to take French leave to do it, there'll be another bust-up for me with Miss Druce. Oh dear! What a nuisance it is! I always seem to be having to get into rows."

For a moment the impulse came to her to go straight to the headmistress, and, confiding in her, ask her for permission to go up to London to see Mr. Morris. But after a brief consideration Pip dismissed that plan as hopeless.

"She'd never let me do it," she told herself. "She wasn't in the room when Mr. Morris made me promise to go to him if ever there was anything I wanted, and I should never be able to make her believe that he really meant what he said. And if I did make her believe it, she wouldn't let me go without asking my people, I expect. And then she'd insist upon sending somebody with me. Grown-ups are so silly over things like that. No! The only thing to be done is for me to go, and then to tell her why I went afterwards. It will mean more punishments, I suppose! Still, I'm used to them, and, anyway, if I do get her father's consent to her accepting the scholarship, I shall have atoned to Sheila for having ragged her study."

The bell for lessons began to ring, and Pip turned her steps in the direction of the classroom, making her plans as she strolled leisurely along.

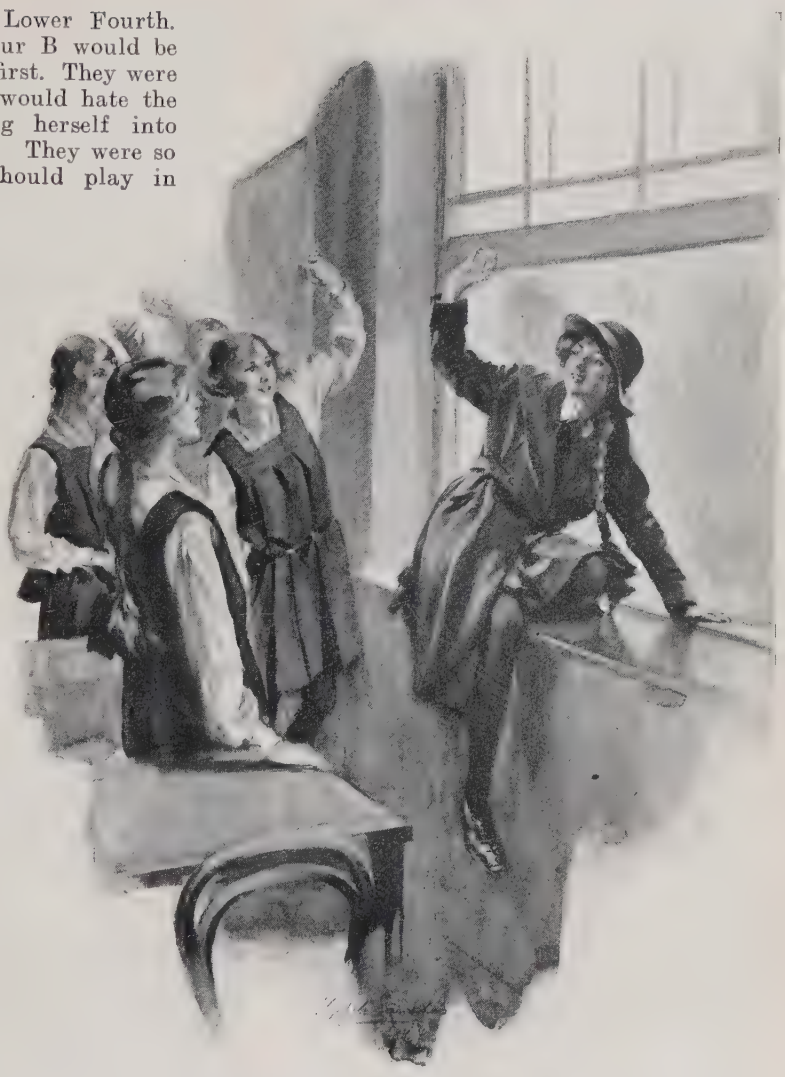
"There's not time to do anything before lessons," she thought. "So I'll go into school for the first half of the morning and answer up to roll. Then in break I'll tell the rest of the form what I'm going to do and get them to lend me some cash for my travelling expenses. I know I've nothing like enough in hand myself. Then I'll write a note to Miss Kent to tell her I'll be back this evening, so that they won't go getting the wind up—thinking I've run away or eloped or anything. And then I'll slip off and catch that twelve something train up to town. I'll have a taxi and drive straight to Mr. Morris's office. There's one of his business cards in that cup on Sheila's mantelpiece. When I go in to make up her fire in break, I'll bag that and take it along with me for the address. I expect he'll be having lunch when I get there, but I'll make them let me wait till he comes back. With any luck at all, I shall be able to catch the four o'clock train back again, and Sheila will be able to write her letter in time to catch to-night's post. It won't matter her having written the other one refusing. She can wire and tell them not to open it or something. Or perhaps Miss Druce will. Miss Druce will manage it some way, anyhow, I'm sure—once I've got Sheila's father to say yes."

It all seemed quite straightforward and easy. The chief difficulty, Pip thought,

would be with the Lower Fourth. The members of Four B would be certain to object at first. They were all such pals—they would hate the idea of her getting herself into another row so soon. They were so anxious that she should play in the Second Eleven match and win her hockey Colours, as well for her own sake as for the honour of the form. They would be so awfully afraid that to punish her for the escapade Miss Druce might stop her games.

And then Pip gave a little gasp of dismay and drew up short. This was the day of the last practice—the practice Miss Parr had warned her only yesterday that she must not miss. If she went to London to see Sheila's father she would *have* to miss it. And then——

And then it wouldn't much matter whether Miss Druce cut off her games or not! If she wasn't up on the hockey-field punctually at half-past two that afternoon, Miss Parr would take her out of the team and put someone else—probably Edith Hart—to play right-inside in her stead.



"'Good-bye,' Pip said, gazing round at her anxious friends" (p. 313

Drawn by Elizabeth Earnshaw

For quite two minutes Pip stood there in the corridor, just where she had stopped, fighting a terrible battle. In the excitement of discovering the secret of Sheila's depression and the joy of finding that there was something that she could do to help, Pip had forgotten every word about that important hockey practice until this very minute. The recollection of it put a very different complexion upon the whole affair. Pip didn't a bit mind breaking rules for Sheila's sake. She was quite ready to face scolding and punishment on her fag-mistress's account. But to lose this wonderful chance of winning her hockey Colours and so going down to history as the first girl at St. Cecilia's to gain them while still in a junior year—well, just at first, Pip felt that she really couldn't do it! Not even to make amends to Sheila for that study-ragging affair!

But for all her naughtiness, Pip was of the stuff of which heroes and martyrs are made. As she stood there hesitating, the thought of Sheila's misery came to her, and the recollection of the senior's hopeless attitude as she sat huddled up in her chair

in Study Seven, served to turn the scale. After all, she, Pip, would probably have plenty of other chances of winning her Colours, as a senior if not as a junior—provided, of course, that she did not succeed in getting herself expelled from St. Cecilia's first. But this might be the only opportunity Sheila would ever have of gaining her heart's desire. A rush of heroic determination, worthy of a better cause, filled Pip's heart. She would act the part of a martyr and a heroine, she would sacrifice her hockey Colours for Sheila's sake. And she went into the Lower Fourth classroom with her mind made up. She would go to Mr. Morris that very day, and claim the fulfilment of his pledged word.

She had still the Lower Fourth to reckon with, however. When Miss Kent departed at the eleven o'clock break, setting her form free to adjourn to the dining-hall for biscuits and milk, and then to disport themselves as they chose for the half-hour's recreation, Pip darted across the classroom and shut the door after the mistress. Then, standing in front of it so that nobody should go out, she turned to address her friends.

"Half a sec., everybody, I want to speak to you," she said. And then she unfolded her plan.

It met with violent opposition at first, as Pip had expected. Four B had not forgotten, even for a moment, about the hockey practice. It remembered it at once, and there was a howl of protest from the members of the form when Pip announced her intention of putting herself definitely and finally out of the running for inclusion in the team.

"No, Pip, you can't! You mustn't! Miss Parr won't excuse you again. She wouldn't be able to, even if she wanted to. After missing practices for a whole week you simply *must* be there for the last one before the match. Think of your Colours! Think of Edith Hart's being put in to play instead of you! Think of how Middle Four will crow if you're put out now."

"And think of all the trouble we took to keep you in," pleaded Phyllis reproachfully.

"I know." Pip looked at her friends with troubled eyes. "It's beastly rough luck on the form, I know. But—well, after all, Colours are only Colours, and it's Sheila's whole career. If I can make Mr. Morris change his mind—and I *can* if he keeps his word of honour to me—it would be jolly mean of me not to do it. Wouldn't it now?"

"But why need it be to-day?" cried Susie. "Why won't to-morrow do? There won't be any hockey for you to-morrow, for Miss Parr always likes the team to have a day's rest before a match. If you'd only wait until to-morrow you might be able to get proper permission to go."

"To-morrow will be too late. The letter's got to be written to-day. In fact, it's probably written by now. That won't matter, of course, as long as Sheila can write another to-day to say that she'll accept. But if I wait till to-morrow, they'll have offered the scholarship to the next candidate, and Sheila's chance of taking it will be gone."

"Well, but couldn't you wire to Mr. Morris, or get on to him on the 'phone?" asked Rita.

"Or couldn't you tell Miss Druce so that she might be able to manage something?" Aileen added desperately.

Pip shook her head at all these suggestions.

"Wiring and 'phoning are no good. It's much easier to say 'No' in a telegram or over the 'phone than it is to say it to a person's face. And as for telling Miss Druce—well, I ask you! You know what grown-ups are—is it likely to be any good telling Miss Druce about it?"

"You never know. She might be all right about it," urged Aileen, who was quite as much distressed at the thought of the trouble her friend would get into if she carried out her mad scheme, as she was at the loss of the honour and glory to Form Four B if Pip failed to win her Colours.

"And she might not!" said Pip conclusively. "No, I daren't risk telling the Head. I must go myself. And I must start pretty soon, too, or break will be over and my chance of getting off will be gone. Look here, do be bricks all of you, and help me! I want you to lend me some cash to pay for my fare. I haven't got enough of my own."

"Don't let's lend her any. Then she can't go," said Rita. And the other members of the form seemed inclined to agree with this suggestion.

Pip grew desperate.

"I *must* go," she said. "I've got a special reason for wanting to. It's not only because of the S.O.S. I got you to start that chiefly because I wanted to do something for Sheila. I suppose I shall

have to tell you—it was me who ragged her study in the beginning of term—and I've been looking about for something to do to make up for it ever since."

"You ragged her study!" gasped Rita in amazement. "But—but you were in bed that night. Locked up in your cubicle! However did you manage to do it and keep it so dark?"

"You must have told an awful fib about it," said Lucy virtuously.

"No, I didn't. I didn't say a single word that wasn't true. I'll tell you all about it some time—or you can ask Susie and Aileen to tell you. They know. But there isn't time to explain how I did it now. Only, you see, I've got a very special reason for wanting to help Sheila. It was a rotten thing to do, spoiling her things like that, and I've been sorry about it and wanting to make up for it all the term."

"You have made up for it. You saved her life on the railway," Phyllis said.

"That doesn't count. I wasn't meaning to make up then. And besides, that was a thing anybody would have had to have done if they'd had the chance and had thought of it in time. If I *hadn't* done it, after thinking of it, I should have been the most awful rotter. But this is different. This is something that I really could do to atone. Do be bricks and help me! I never thought any of *you* would go letting me down."

Pip's voice was so reproachful that the hearts of the members of Four B were melted and they one and all succumbed.

"Oh, well, if you've made up your mind to hang yourself I suppose we shall have to help you do it," Rita said in resigned tones. "How much money do you want? Someone had better add it up and see how much she'll need while the rest of us go and fetch our purses. Mine's up in the dorm, and I expect I shall run bang into Matron and get an order-mark for going there out of hours. But in for a penny, in for a pound!" And she hurried away in quest of her worldly wealth, followed by most of the other members of the form.

Form Four B never did things by halves. Having made up its mind to help, it set to and did it with all the energy it could muster. One girl fetched Pip's hat and coat and out-door shoes. Another darted off to the dining-hall to gather a handful of biscuits to save the adventurer from starving on the journey, for it soon became obvious that the united wealth of the form would not do more than pay for a railway ticket and taxi. There would certainly be none to spare to pay for any meals. Somebody else retrieved the address of Mr. Morris's office from Sheila's mantelpiece—Sheila fortunately being absent and the card therefore easily obtained; while the rest scoured pockets and desks and lockers and drawers in search of stray coppers and unused postage stamps to supplement the small capital they had been able to scrape together.

Pip scribbled a hasty note to Miss Kent, which she sealed and placed in a prominent position on the form-mistress's desk. Then she put on her outdoor garments and prepared to depart, out of the window, always a favourite mode of exit with the juniors, and in this case a safe one too, since Four B's classroom windows looked out over the gardens and not into the quadrangle. Nobody was likely to be in the gardens just now, unless it were a stray gardener or two, whom Pip could easily elude.

"Good-bye," Pip said, gazing round at her anxious friends as she climbed on to the window-sill. "I hope everything will be all right for you. I don't think you'll get into a bother over it. I've told Miss Kent I've gone out for the day on urgent business, but that I'll be back this evening in time for prep. I've said that you've all tried to stop me going and that it isn't your fault in the very least, and that I'll tell her all about it when I come back. Don't tell her that I've gone to see Mr. Morris if you can possibly help it. I hope she won't ask. I think I've put it so that there's quite a chance that she mayn't. But, anyhow, try and keep it dark just where I've gone until it's too late for her to send anyone after me to fetch me back."

"We will," promised Four B. And Pip scrambled through the window, dropped lightly down on to the border below, and sped off to finish the work begun by the S.O.S.

(To be concluded)

The Wishing Cap

A Play for Acting Out-of-Doors

By Agnes M. Miall

CHARACTERS:

THE CAPTAIN OF THE CAP.
MISCHIEF, *a jester.*

Elves:

RED
WHITE
BLUE

DRESS AND PROPERTIES:

The Elves should wear long stockings over cork soles and tunics cut in points, their costumes being entirely in the colours indicated by their names. The CAPTAIN *is dressed in black in similar fashion, but with a corslet of steel (which can be made at home of cardboard covered with silver paper or paint) buckled over his tunic, a helmet on his head, and a toy sword scabbard at his side. His beard can be home-made of cotton-wool.* MISCHIEF *wears the usual jester's costume, preferably of yellow and mauve.*

The Wishing Cap is a large sheet of stiff white paper twisted into a cone; it should be exactly like a dunce's cap.

SCENE.—*Elfland, for which any green outdoor background, such as a garden lawn with bushes or trees behind, will serve admirably. On a bush, centre back, hangs the Wishing Cap, and beneath it, cross-legged on a grassy bank, is the* CAPTAIN OF THE CAP. *(If there is no bank, he should sit on a log, as he will be too low to be seen by the audience if on the ground level). He is a little old Elf with a long white beard, and he sits very still, with his eyes closed and his head occasionally nodding.*

Enter the ELVES, *chasing one another. After a moment's play they draw together in a cluster at right front of stage, nudging each other as they eye the* CAPTAIN *and the Cap.*

Red. I can't think why they put such an old nid-nod to guard the Wishing Cap.

Blue. Anyone could steal it, as easy as winking.

[*Unseen by them the* CAPTAIN'S *eyes fly open. He gives a tremendous wink at the audience and instantly shuts them again.*]

White. [*Eagerly.*] I say, it would be fun to.

The Others. To what?

White. To steal the Cap. Just to show how easily we can.

Blue. Yes, rather a lark. Then we might have all the wishes we want, instead of only one on our birthdays every year.

Red. I say, let's do it. I want a crowd of things.

The Others. So do I! Let's!

White. We'll pass the Cap round and all wish in turn. Bags I first.

The Others. No, me first! Me first!

[*An uproar, all shouting.*]

White. [*Eventually making himself heard.*] All right, all right. No need to wake the old boy. I'll be magnanimous and have last turn.

[*There is sudden quiet, as* BLUE *and* RED *exchange suspicious glances.*]

Blue. What's mag—mag—what you said?

White. [*Blandly.*] Where *were* you poor elves brought up? It's a short way of saying that I'll be unselfish and give you first wish.

Red. White unselfish!

Blue. Go for him, boy!

[*They make a rush at* WHITE, *overpower him, and pin him full length on the ground, both sitting firmly on him. He struggles in vain.*

White. Let me go!

Blue. Tell us why you want third wish. Not for *our* good.

White. Let me go!

Red. [*Who is in front, astride of* WHITE, *turning round to consult* BLUE *behind him.*] What's he up to? What's the benefit of wishing last?

[WHITE *seizes the opportunity to free himself and runs away from them mockingly, left.*]

White. So that I can unwish everything *you* wish, boobies. [*They run after him threateningly.*] Come on, boys, let's get to business.

[*On tiptoe, in single file, they creep confidently towards the Wishing Cap,* WHITE *foremost. As he stretches his hand out to seize the Cap, the* CAPTAIN'S *eyes suddenly fly open and he whips his sword out, tripping* WHITE *up neatly. The other two fall over him as he goes down. Above the tangled heap of Elves the* CAPTAIN *winks very slowly and then composes himself once more to sleep.*]

Blue. [*Getting up and ruefully rubbing his elbow.*] Ooo-oo! What happened?

White. [*Rubbing his ankle.*] The old fellow tripped me up

Red. [*Rubbing his head.*] I don't know which is bruise and which is me. The old soldier's not such a nid-nod as he looks.

Captain. [*Opening his eyes and jerking the words out.*] Not quite. [*Closes his eyes again.*]

White. [*Disgustedly.*] Old mandarin! [MISCHIEF *strolls into sight.*] The question is, how are we to get the Wishing Cap *now?*

Mischief. I can tell you that.

Blue. It's old Mischief. [*They cluster round him.*] Yes, tell us.

Mischief. [*Dramatically.*] You must pretend to be philanthropists.

Red. Is that a new kind of wrestling that'll be too much for him? [*Points to* CAPTAIN.]

Mischief. A philanthropist is a person who goes about improving the world.

White. I might improve Red and Blue. They need it.

Red and *Blue.* [*Indignantly.*] You couldn't!

Mischief. [*Blandly.*] Quite impossible, I should say. But don't you know, my poor little ignoramuses——

White. Does that word mean the way my ankle aches?

Red. And the bruise on my head? [*Feels it gingerly.*]

Mischief. [*Severely.*] It means *all* the excessively silly things you've done in your excessively silly lives. Chief among which is trying to get the Wishing Cap for your own benefit.

Blue. [*Impudently.*] Did you think we wanted it for yours?

Mischief. [*Continuing.*] Of course, the Captain won't let it go. Now, if you'd said you intended to use your wishes for the benefit of mankind, he'd be bound, by Cap law, to hand it over till sunset.

Red. But we want it for ourselves.

Mischief. [*Slyly.*] Once you've got it, the Captain can't take it back, whatever you use it for.

Elves. Ho! ho! Now we see!

Mischief. What lightning intelligence!

[*The Elves join hands,* WHITE *in the middle, and advance in a line towards the* CAPTAIN. *Every two steps they halt and sing a verse of the song "The Wishing Cap"* (published by W. Paxton, 95 New Oxford Street, at 6d.), *which relates all the good the Cap might accomplish. Mischief joins in the chorus, which runs:*

"If fairy tales were true,
And fortune were my hap,
I'll tell what I would do
If I'd the Wishing Cap."

[*While this is sung for the last time the* CAPTAIN *rises and slowly and reluctantly backs out of sight, as though being pushed by an invisible force. As the song ends* MISCHIEF *dashes through the Elves and triumphantly snatches the unguarded Cap.*]

Mischief. There, you see! Victory for the philanthropists! Now I'll have first wish for showing you how. [*Puts the Cap on his head.*] I wish that all three of you may discover the vanity of elfin wishes.

White. [*Scornfully.*] Not likely!

Red. What stuff that fellow talks! But he's got us the Cap. Here, Mischief, hand over!

Mischief. [*Gaily, tossing the Cap.*] Catch!

[*He throws it into the air as he turns away and strolls after the* CAPTAIN. *The Elves scramble for the Cap and* BLUE *secures it.*]

Blue [*Wearing the Cap.*] I wish I knew everything in the world, so that I need never go to school again. Won't it be roaring fun playing all day? Your turn, White.

[*He hands over the Cap and takes the* CAPTAIN'S *vacant seat on the bank, where he sits with his head propped up by his hands.*]

White. [*Wearing the Cap.*] A jolly good wish, Blue. Now, what shall I ask for?

Red. Do hurry up, White, or it'll be sunset and bedtime before I get an innings at all.

White. Oh, *bother* bedtime! [*Struck by an idea.*] I wish that there shall be no more beds or bedtime in the whole world.

Red. Hurray! Good for you! [*Takes Cap and puts it on.*] And I—I wish for all the apples in the whole world.

White. [*Joyfully.*] Oh, I say, what a feast we shall have!

[*They seat themselves on the bank by* BLUE.]

[*Enter the* CAPTAIN, *wheeling a brightly coloured child's barrow filled with apples, which he tips out on the ground at* RED'S *feet.*]

Captain. [*Bowing very low.*] First instalment of your wish, mighty one. [*Exit* CAPTAIN *with barrow.*]

Red. What beauties! Here, boys, have some. I say, isn't he humble now that we've got the Cap? [*He and* WHITE *help themselves.*] Here, Blue, you haven't got one.

Blue. [*Raising his face from his hands dolefully.*] I don't want one. I know too much about apples to want to eat them. Eve tempted Adam with an apple——

Red. [*To* WHITE.] He won't have one. He must be dotty.

Blue. [*Sadly.*] Far from being dotty, my wish has made me so learned and wise that I can't enjoy anything so simple as an apple.

Red. [*Munching.*] Well, I think they're scrumptious! [*Re-enter* CAPTAIN, *with barrow again piled with apples, which he empties as before.*] I could eat them for ever!

Captain. That's just what you will have to do, mighty one. Second instalment of your wish, and plenty more to come.

White. [*Munching.*] There can't be too many for me.

[*During the following scene the* CAPTAIN *continues to appear at regular intervals with a fresh barrowful of apples, which the Elves regard with less and less interest every time.*]

Blue. [*Gloomily.*] My head's simply bursting with all that's inside it, and it's so heavy with knowledge I can hardly hold it up with both hands.

Red. Rather a lark if it broke your neck and rolled off.

Blue. [*Dismally.*] Oh, a great lark. I'd like to go to bed. [*In schoolmaster tone.*] Everyone requires eight hours' sleep every night if he is to keep in good health, and this sleep must be taken——

White. Oh, hold hard! I thought you'd wished lessons away.

Blue. I possess all the knowledge in the

world, and if I don't let some leak away it will burst my brain.

Red. [*To* WHITE]. His was a silly wish, wasn't it? You and I managed much better. Have another apple?

White. [*Rather faintly.*] I don't think I care so much for apples as I did.

Captain. [*Wheeling in a barrow-load.*] You wished for them, mighty one, so they must all be eaten. [*Puts another into* RED'S *unwilling hand.*]

Red. Here, you eat it. I've got a pain somewhere. Oo-oo!

White. So have I. Apples aren't much fun. Eat them yourself. It was *your* wish.

Red. I feel too ill.

Blue. Not so ill as I do. Knowing everything in the world is worse than eating all the apples in the world, because, you see——

White. Oh, shut up. I'm going to bed. [*Gets up miserably.*]

Captain. [*Bringing in a barrowful.*] You forget, mighty one, that you abolished beds and bedtime.

White. Oh dear, what an idiot I was! Well, let's have a game, boys, to cheer us up.

Red. [*Slowly taking a fresh apple.*] I haven't time, with all these hateful things to be eaten.

Blue. I am so wise that I shall never be able to play again. Oh, my brain will burst with all I know. [*Nurses his head.*]

White. It will soon be dusk, and we shall have to sit up all night——

Red. Eating everlasting apples that make us ill——

Blue. Knowing everything in the whole wide world. And we can't unwish our wishes, because we're only allowed one each.

[*There is a pause of complete misery. Enter* MISCHIEF, *gaily swinging his bauble. He surveys the unhappy Elves with a malicious smile.*]

Mischief. Well, well, here are the philanthropists.

Blue. Pity we weren't. Wishing for yourself is a poor game.

Mischief. [*Slyly.*] As jolly as sandboys.

Red. [*Surveying the piles of apples.*] They can't be a very cheerful race, then.

Mischief. I'm glad my advice was such a success, and you all got your wishes.

White. [*Jumping up suddenly.*] So did you get *yours*, and it was the only sensible one of the lot. Oh, Mischief, wishing *is* a silly business, as you said.

Captain. [*Emptying more apples.*] Not wishing in itself, mighty one, but relying on wishing alone. It ought to be backed up with hard work and common sense and growing up, and not be got for nothing. It ought to come at the right time and in the right place——

Red. [*Groaning.*] My apples are in the wrong place. [*Nurses his pain.*]

Blue. And I am wise at the wrong time—when my silly head isn't big enough.

Mischief. They know what they're talking about now, I fancy. Look here, Captain, sunset will restore you the Cap and release them. But it's still daylight. Be sporting and put them out of their misery at once. You're the only person here who hasn't had a wish yet.

Captain. [*Severely.*] They certainly don't deserve it. They cheated me into giving up the Cap——

Elves. But we wish we hadn't. Oh, please forgive us. [*They kneel at his feet, holding out their arms pleadingly.*]

Mischief. Please do. It was my fault, too—my incurable love of a joke.

Captain. [*Smiling.*] Well, well. It's not for nothing that the Wishing Cap is shaped like a dunce's. [*Puts it on.*] I wish that these foolish Elves may return to their *status quo.*

Mischief. [*Staring.*] What does that mean, mighty one?

Blue. [*Joyfully releasing his head from his hands.*] It means that I don't know anything at all and shall have to go to school to-morrow. Hurray!

Red. [*Kicking over the barrow.*] It means that I need never eat another apple.

White. It means that there are beds again, and I'm going to mine this minute.

[*After wishing, the* CAPTAIN *has replaced the Cap on its bush and taken the same posture on the bank under it as at the opening of the play. From an unseen piano comes softly the air of the "Wishing Cap" as the Elves run merrily out with cries of "Good night."* MISCHIEF *follows them more slowly, pausing at the entrance to shake his bauble laughingly at the* CAPTAIN, *who opens his eyes and winks for answer.*]

THE ADVENTURES of BINGO DOG

By CONSTANCE EGAN

NO. 5.—BINGO AND TISHY AT SCHOOL

BINGO DOG and Tishy the little green lizard, after their adventures at the Manor House, were once again on the high road seeking their fortunes and a home.

"It would never have done," panted Bingo. He and Tishy were now in a field some way from the Manor House. "I don't want to be a watch-dog, chained to a kennel all my life, I want to be a house-dog. Someone's got to love me for myself, not because I can bark and keep away burglars."

"I love you for yourself, most noble Bingo," squeaked Tishy, gazing at Bingo Dog as if he were the Prince of Wales.

"Yes, old bean," answered Bingo, "but you're not a human. We've got to find someone who wants a dog like me more than anything. There must be heaps of 'em about. And . . . er . . . of course, someone who likes green lizards better than cats," he wound up.

"Do *you* like green lizards better than cats?" asked Tishy.

"You bet I do," barked Bingo, grinning. "I wouldn't carry a cat around as if it were a jolly old bone, or an old green slipper, way I do you. Now, the next thing to do is to find some dinner," he went on briskly.

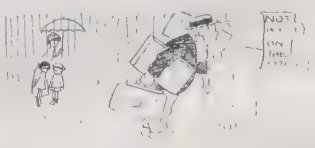
"There's plenty for my dinner in this meadow," piped Tishy. "You go and find what you want, noble Bingo. I shall be all right here."

"Righto," agreed Bingo. "I noticed some cottages up the road. I'll go and hang around the back doors and see what I can find. May even find a home, who knows? Anyway, I'll come back for you, old sport. Ta, ta! Don't overeat yourself on your grubs and insects."

With that Bingo Dog squeezed himself under the field gate and trotted off up the road in search of dinner.

Tishy turned his attention to the many buzzy insects in that field of buttercups and daisies. He made a very good meal for a small lizard, and then stretched himself out in the sun and fell asleep.

When he awoke he heard voices quite near him. He opened one little



beady eye and discovered a nice little girl sitting in the grass beside him making daisy chains.

Apparently there were other children there too, but Tishy could not see them from the place where he lay half hidden by the long grasses.

"What you looking for, Bobby?" asked the small girl who sat beside Tishy, making daisy chains.

"A grasshopper," answered the boy. "I want to find a grasshopper for the Natural History lesson, but they're awful beggars to catch. You can hear them, but you can't *see* them. And then if you *do* catch sight of one it hops away before you can catch hold of it. There!" Bobby made a dart. The grasshopper hopped. Bobby spied it, clinging to a tall grass; he raised his hand carefully, slowly, and held his breath. He didn't want to frighten the grasshopper, but he meant to catch it this time. Gently he brought his hand down, but the grasshopper must have seen or felt the hand coming, for it gave one enormous hop, and landed right on Tishy's back. Of course it didn't *know* it was Tishy's back, it thought it was a strange little green rock.

Bobby, quick as lightning, followed the insect with his eyes, and brought his hand down right on top of the grasshopper, Tishy and all!

Tishy wriggled—the boy lifted his hand quickly.

"Oh!" he gasped, and the grasshopper winked and hopped away unnoticed.

"What is it?" cried the small girl who sat beside Tishy making daisy chains.

"Caught your old grasshopper?" asked another child, who was making a pretty bunch of buttercups and daisies and pink and white clovers.

The boy bent down to examine the live thing he had touched.

"I believe it's . . . a . . . lizard," he said slowly.

The girls gathered round.

"Oh! do let's see!" they cried.

The boy picked Tishy up, very gently and carefully. His eyes shone with excitement. "I'm going to take it to school for the Natural History lesson. It's specimen day, but I bet no one 'll have a specimen like this," he went on proudly; "you don't often see lizards round here."

"P'r'aps it isn't a lizard," suggested one of the girls.

"What would you call it, then? An alligator?" asked the boy scornfully.

"Oh! the darling little lizard," cried the small girl who had sat beside Tishy making daisy chains, and she stroked him very gingerly with one finger.

"Come on," cried the boy, "or we shall be late for school."

The boy carried Tishy quite carefully,

'Bingo trotted quietly behind the children"

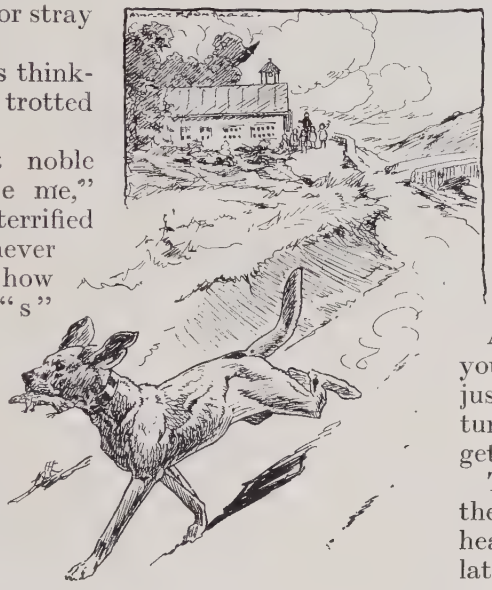
Drawn by Harry Rountree

but, oh my ! that little lizard was scared stiff. Where was his beloved Bingo Dog ? And where was he being taken ? To school ? He'd never heard of school before, and, in his funny little lizard mind, he imagined it to be a place for stray lizards, like the Dogs' Home is for stray dogs.

Just as he was thinking all this, up trotted Bingo.

" Oh ! motht noble Bingo, thave me," lisped the terrified Tishy, who never could remember how to pronounce " s " when he was at all frightened.

Bingo heard that tiny squeak, though none of the children noticed it, and he danced around the boy, barking furiously.



" Bingo never stopped running till he had turned the corner of the road "

" Down, down ! " shouted the boy, holding Tishy high above his head.

" Don't let him get the lizard," cried one of the girls, in alarm, " he might think it's a rat and kill it."

So they thought he might mistake his own little friend Tishy for a rat, did they ? Bingo gave a snort of disgust, but he ceased jumping up at the boy.

" It's all right," he barked cheerily to Tishy, " don't you worry. They won't hurt you. They simply don't understand you belong to me. I'll follow up, and we'll run off by and by if we want to. One of 'em might like to adopt us. I like kids."

Bingo Dog stopped barking and trotted quietly along behind the children.

When they reached school one of the girls turned and saw Bingo.

" Good gracious ! just look," she cried, " that funny old dog must have followed us all the way from the meadow." But when Bingo tried to go into the school they shoo'd him away and closed the door.

Now, if you're a dog and you want a thing, the first thing you do is to bark for it. Bingo Dog barked ! Nobody paid any attention.

And if you can't get what you want that way, you howl. Bingo Dog sat down and howled. Nobody paid any attention.

And if you can't get what you want that way, you just seize the first opportunity that comes along to get what you want.

The opportunity came in the shape of a small red-headed boy who was very late for school that afternoon. He ran panting and puffing up the school steps, pulling off his cap and satchel as he ran. And when the door was opened he rushed in. Bingo Dog, quick as winking, followed close on his heels. The small boy, very hot and sticky from hurrying, slipped into his place in the class-room. Bingo Dog, just behind him, slunk behind the blackboard.

If something unusual had not been happening at that moment, I am quite sure that the master would have noticed the late appearance of the small red-headed boy, and I am also quite sure that more than one child would have seen Bingo Dog slink behind the blackboard.

As it was, both these events passed unnoticed, much to the relief of the red-headed boy and Bingo Dog.

It was the Natural History lesson, and all eyes were fixed on a strange little green lizard the master was hold-

ing up. Beside the master's desk stood Bobby, pink with pride.

"I found it in one of Bramwell's meadows," he was saying.

"Most interesting," observed the master; "this is not one of the ordinary British species at all. I have never seen one like it in England before, except, of course, at the Zoo. Come round my desk, children, and we will examine this remarkable little reptile."

The children crowded eagerly round the desk, and then the master gave a lecture on Tishy the little green lizard.

Of course, it is very nice to be admired, and every one of those children was admiring Tishy all through that lesson; but the poor little lizard was anything but happy. You see, he had no idea that his beloved Bingo Dog had slipped into the schoolroom behind the red-headed boy.

Bingo Dog sat impatiently behind the blackboard while the master talked about Tishy's scaly coat and forked tongue and queer little legs.

The lesson went on and on and on. Bingo Dog grew more and more impatient. He wanted to get away. At last he could bear it no longer.

"I'll put an end to this lesson and get hold of Tishy, see if I don't," he growled; and he sprang from his hiding place behind the blackboard and barked his loudest.

What a commotion there was!

"Who brought that dog in school?" demanded the master in a loud voice. He had to speak loud to make himself heard above the din Bingo was making.

"He followed us from the meadow," said one child, "but we didn't let him in."

"Then let him out at once," said the master.

Someone opened the door. Someone else tried to shoo Bingo out. But he wasn't going to be shoo'd by anyone till he'd got his Tishy. He jumped up at the master, who held the lizard well out of reach.

Tishy gave a tremendous wriggle. The master held him firmly by the tail. Tishy gave another wriggle, his tail snapped and he fell. Bingo caught him like a biscuit, as he fell, and streaked for the open door. Down the passage he went, out at the front door and away before you could say "Jack Robinson."

"Oh!" gasped the children.

"His tail's come off!" cried Bobby in dismay.

The master smiled. He was holding Tishy's tail in his hand.

The small child who had sat beside Tishy in the field making daisy chains burst into tears.

"Poor darling little lizard!" she sobbed.

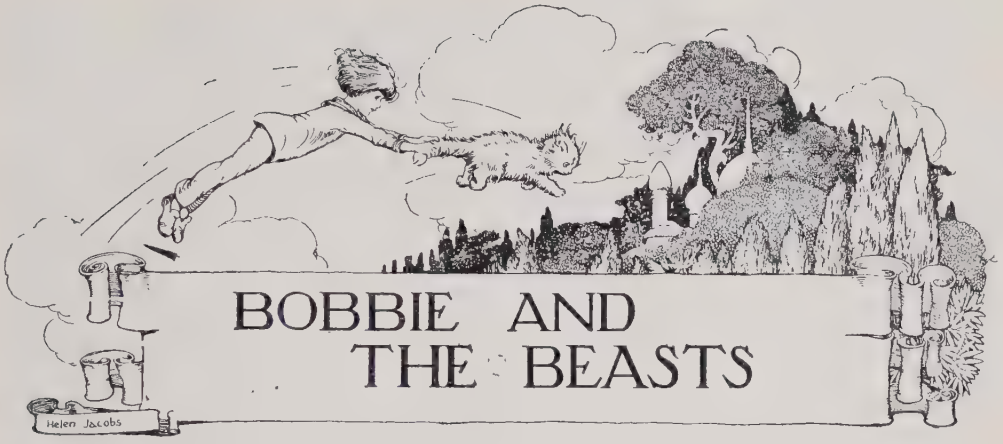
"That's all right, Molly," said the master kindly; "it won't have hurt him a bit. Lizard's tails do break off like that, and they grow fresh ones."

They went into the road outside the school, but Bingo was out of sight, so it was no good trying to follow him.

Bingo Dog never stopped running till he had turned the corner of the road, shot down a little lane, raced across a field and swum across a stream. Then he dropped his burden, took a long drink at the stream, and sat down panting, with his long thin red tongue hanging out of his mouth.

"That was an adventure," he laughed. "Sorry you had to leave your tail behind, old top. Whoever heard of a bob-tailed lizard? But never mind, bobbing's all the rage just now. All those kids were bobbed."

"Oh! that's all right," piped Tishy; "that wasn't my first tail. I lost that long ago. I'll soon grow another."



BOBBIE AND THE BEASTS

By Violet M. Methley

NO. 5.—BOBBIE AND THE FROGS

WHEN Bobbie had stopped having those mumps, which I told you about last time, the doctor said that he must go away for a change.

Now, a change is even nicer than a holiday, because it comes in the middle of lesson-time, quite extra, and this was a particularly nice change, because it was to Aunt Elsie's.

Aunt Elsie had a nice house and a nice garden and a nice cook, and a nice cat and a nice dog, and she was nice herself, so that altogether Bobbie was so happy and busy thinking about the change that he had not time to bother much about Elephant's Hair at the moment.

There was all the excitement of packing, and wondering whether he would be allowed to swim in the beautiful pond at the end of Aunt Elsie's garden, which was big enough for a boat and a bridge.

Bobbie *wasn't* allowed to swim: I may as well say that at once. He wasn't even allowed to paddle, which was very annoying; but, all the same, the pond was lovely to play with, because it was full of sticklebacks and newts and minnows and tadpoles and frogs. It was *much* the nicest thing in all the change.

Well, one day—because every story has got to be about one special day, hasn't it?—Bobbie ran down to the pond as usual, directly after dinner.

It was a lovely hot afternoon, with all the bees and other insects humming and buzzing, and the little boy felt very sad to think that he might not even paddle, when the water looked so beautiful.

"And I do so want to learn to swim," Bobbie thought. "To swim like—like that frog's swimming."

The frog was a very pretty bright yellow-and-green one, and it was swimming along quite near the bank, very beautifully, striking out its arms and legs just like a person.

"Why, it put that in my book!" Bobbie thought. "It said that if you copied the way a frog used its arms and legs in the water, you could learn to swim, on land. What a splendid idea! I'll begin at once."

So Bobbie lay quite flat, face downwards, on the grass by the pond, and he began to move his arms and legs, just as the frog did, and it really *was* quite like swimming, except that he didn't move along.

And before Bobbie had time to get tired of it, one of the funny things

happened that *did* happen to him. Perhaps you can guess what it was.

The frog stopped swimming and raised its goggling eyes and little round head above the water, peering at Bobbie.

"Well, how are you getting on?" it asked, in a very croaksome voice.

Bobbie stopped swimming and sat up, staring.

"Oh, quite well, thank you!" he said politely; but he saw at once what had happened. Doing like the frog had made the frog able to talk to him, and *perhaps* it would give him a chance to go to Fairy-Beast-Land again.

"Won't you come out and talk comfortably?" he said, but the frog rolled his eyes and shook his head.

"I dislike getting my feet dry," he said. "You'd better come with me, and I'll take you to Fairy-Frog-Land."

"I mustn't," Bobbie said sadly. "I've been told not to swim and not to paddle."

"You're not going to paddle *or* swim," answered the frog. "Just copy me and it will be quite all right. I'll show you."

So the frog scrambled out upon the bank, and told Bobbie to imitate him exactly. And Bobbie did, diving directly the frog dived, so quickly that there was no time to think what would happen.

And what *did* happen was not in the least what Bobbie would have expected if he had had a minute to expect anything.

Instead of the bottom of the pond being a slimy, muddy place, with water everywhere, Bobbie found that he was standing in a big, beautiful meadow, very, very green, except where it was very, very yellow with marsh-marigolds. Here and there were lovely blue pools, and the sky was blue, too, and the sunshine very yellow.

Altogether, Fairy-Frog-Land was a *very* nice place, and the frog who had brought him there looked greener and yellower than ever.

"Yes, it's my best suit," he said, when he saw Bobbie looking at it, and he blushed at the same time, if a frog *can* blush. "You see, I'm going to pay an important visit this afternoon—upon a young lady, in fact."

"Oh, are you really the frog who would 'a-wooing go'?" Bobbie asked eagerly. The frog nodded.

"Yes," he said. "Although my name is really Antony Rowley—as I expect you gathered from the song."

"Well, I wasn't sure," Bobbie said. "It didn't say."

"You can't expect a song to tell you everything," the frog answered. "Anyway, I am Antony Rowley, and my mother is Mrs. Rowley, and—— Hush! Here she comes. Don't tell her that I am here. She treats me like a baby and tries to prevent me from going a-wooing. Try to get her away——"

As he spoke Antony Rowley slipped behind a clump of marsh marigolds, whilst a very big frog, dressed in a bonnet and shawl, came up, puffing and blowing, because she was so fat.

Bobbie bowed politely, wishing that he had a hat to take off.

"How do you do, Mrs. Rowley?" he said, and the fat frog looked at him severely through large round spectacles.

"How did you know my name?" she asked. "Did my son tell you? And where is he?"

Bobbie heard a frightened croak from behind the marsh marigolds and tried to think of something to say.

"Oh, I—I had heard your name before—often," he said.

"Ah, perhaps you have seen my portrait," Mrs. Rowley said. "It was painted on the occasion of my competition with the ox."

"Oh, were you *that* frog?" cried Bobbie.

"Yes; and I very nearly succeeded in swelling out to his size," the fat

frog said. "As a matter of fact, I have never been quite my old self since. But I am *most* persevering. I *never* give up."

"Oh, then, I wonder if you could help me ? " Bobbie began timidly, and asked the old question about the Elephant's Hairs.

Mrs. Rowley shook her head.

" We frogs have no hair—as you may have noticed," she said. " And my circle of friends does not include an elephant, I regret to say. But, if you come with me, I will introduce you to the wisest and most celebrated frog in the country, and he may be able to help you—that is, if he *is* a frog at the moment."

" Oh, thanks ! " Bobbie said, and as they started off together he heard a great sigh of relief from behind the clump of marsh marigolds. So he knew that Antony Rowley would be able to go a-wooing.

Presently they came to a beautiful white-and-yellow Palace, with pools and moats and lakes of blue water all round it. And at the gate of the Palace stood the Frog Footman—yes, the real Frog Footman himself, looking *exactly* as he did in " Alice."

" Is His Royal Highness at home ? " Mrs. Rowley asked, but the Frog Footman only goggled his eyes at her without answering, and, to Bobbie's surprise, she just pushed past him and waddled straight into the Palace.

" We needn't bother about *him*," she said. " He's only there for ornament. Now, I wonder how we shall find His Royal Highness, and who he will be ! That's the worst of being two people at once."

Bobbie thought it all very mysterious as he followed Mrs. Rowley through the Palace corridors, which were really like little canals, with marble pavements running along by the edge of the blue water. It *was* lovely.

Presently they reached the biggest room of all, and this had a great pool in the middle, with a marble throne beside it. And over the throne was a glass case, and in the case a golden ball.

" It was that ball which caused the meeting between His Royal Highness and the Princess, his wife," said Mrs. Rowley. " But doubtless you know the story of how he rescued her ball from the fountain, and won her heart and hand."

" Oh, is he really the dear Frog Prince ? " cried Bobbie.

" That is what common people call him," Mrs. Rowley said severely. " Hush—here he comes ! "

Bobbie saw a very beautiful green frog hopping along the edge of the pool, with a tiny gold crown on his head.

" You see, half the time His Royal Highness keeps his frog shape," Mrs. Rowley whispered, " And half the time he is a Prince, and lives with the Princess in the other wing of the Palace, where there is no water at all. He is the most popular Prince in Fairyland—and the wisest."

The Frog Prince was quite near now, and he looked at Bobbie with kind, sad eyes, and spoke in a voice which wasn't a bit croaksome—only deep and soft.

" So you have come to visit Fairy-Frog-Land, little boy ? "

" Yes, please ! " Bobbie said timidly. " And would you—could you—tell me where to find some Elephant's Hairs—because that is really why I came."

" Certainly," the Frog Prince said. " I shall be delighted to te——"

But before he could finish the word " tell " an extraordinary thing happened. He began to grow bigger and bigger, and his frog skin fell off, and there he stood, a beautiful Fairy Prince, all dressed in green and gold.

" Oh ! " Bobbie gasped, but before he could say anything more the Prince bowed and turned away.

" Pardon me," he said. " I must go to Her Royal Highness."

" Oh, won't you just tell me about

the Hair ? " Bobbie begged, but the Prince shook his head.

" I am very sorry," he said. " But I do not know now—not until I am a frog again. And I *must* go to the Princess ! "

So he hurried away. It *was* disappointing ! Bobbie felt very much inclined to cry as he followed Mrs. Rowley out of the Palace, and perhaps he *would* have cried if something had not happened to distract his attention.

Mrs. Rowley gave a sudden loud croak.

" Be careful ! " she cried. " Don't let him touch you—don't let him come near you ! "

Bobbie looked down, and there was a very small coal-black frog hopping towards him very quickly.

" He's a wicked little thing ! " said Mrs. Rowley, beginning to waddle away as fast as she could. " He'll try to get into your throat, and make you hoarse and croaky."

" He shan't ! " Bobbie cried, and began to run, with the little black frog hop-hop-hopping after him.

They ran and ran—and then suddenly Bobbie tripped over something and fell sprawling on the ground.

" He shan't ! " he cried as he fell, and a voice answered him—not Mrs. Rowley's voice.

" *Who* shan't, Master Bobbie ? " it said, and Bobbie sat up blinking, and saw that it was Nurse.

" I just came to call you in to tea," she said. " And there you were lying by the pond, fast asleep I shouldn't wonder ! "

" I wasn't ! " Bobbie cried indignantly, because there is *nothing* so annoying as to be told you've been asleep.

" And how hoarse you are ! " Nurse said. " I expect you've caught a cold and got a frog-in-your-throat from lying on that nasty wet grass."

" I haven't ! " Bobbie said. " He never got into my throat at all—I wouldn't let him. But he was the only *nasty* frog—the rest were darlings ! "

But Nurse only laughed—as Nurses do.

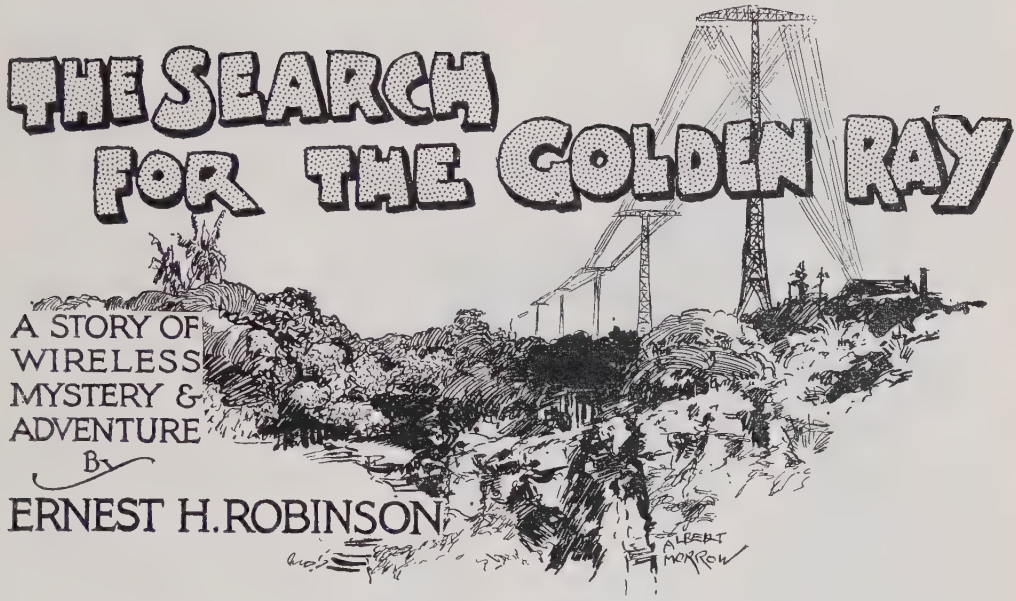
Little Kelly

By M. G. Shields

Little Kelly had a jelly,
Round and very shiv'ry;
Said little Kelly to his jelly,
" Why are you so quiv'ry? "

Little Jelly answered Kelly,
" 'Cause my nerves are bad, sir."
Said little Kelly to his jelly,
" That is very sad, sir."

Little Kelly ate his jelly,
In a kindly way, sir.
Now little Kelly, like his jelly,
Sits and shakes all day, sir.



CHAPTER VII (*Continued*)

A Friend—in Mid Ocean!

THE face of the man clinging to the rope was drawn and white. Though he was staring upwards, he seemed to know that the dreadful arm was snaking up after him, that the baleful eyes of the giant squid were fixed on him in horrible and greedy anticipation.

He pulled himself up hand over hand as fast as he was able. Once the trembling end of the squid's questing feeler touched his boot. He gave a convulsive heave and gained a couple of feet at one effort.

Joan, usually quick to act in all emergencies, cried out in horror and backed away from the rail, her hands covering her eyes. Roger stared, fascinated, not knowing what to do.

Then Dr. Bastable seized the rope to which the sailor was clinging and began to haul steadily on it.

"Bear a hand, Roger!" he called. "Steadily! The rope is old and may not stand much extra strain. Don't jerk it!"

Roger pulled steadily, as he was bidden, and felt the better for some active work. Luckily, he could not see that the dreadful sea-devil had thrown up another arm and yet another, determined not to let its prey escape.

But Tom Allen, the mate, had seen, and he acted swiftly. Seizing a fallen yard that lay on the deck, he lifted it and bore it, staggering, to the side. It was more than a man's load, but goaded to extremes by the peril of the sailor, he managed it. Swiftly he upended it. Then, pausing a moment to get it balanced and directed, he launched it downwards, aiming full into the eyes of the squid.

The heavy spar struck the squid squarely. For a second its arms whipped and thrashed in the air, and then it sank, sank like a stone, dragging the boat with it.

The next moment the sailor was dragged up and over the side.

"I thought it had me! I thought it had me!" he cried, and would have fallen had not Dr. Bastable caught him.

"What's this? What's the matter?" piped a shrill voice, and then, almost at the same time, came another.

"Man overboard! Pirates! To the plank with 'em!"

It was Professor Langley and his parrot. He had come up on deck to find out why Tom Allen had so suddenly left him.

Swiftly Joan explained the dreadful thing that had so nearly happened. The old man nodded wisely and hurried forward.

"They often play about round the ship, those fellows," he said. "Nearly got a man, eh? Nasty business! But I think I have something that will put him right."

He hurried below and presently appeared with a bottle. It was old brandy

"'I found a great bundle of boys' books in the forecastle'"

Drawn by Albert Morrow

and he poured a generous dose between the sailor's teeth. The man coughed as the strong spirit caught his throat and sat up, a little colour coming back to his cheeks.

"My word, sir, that stuff has some bite in it," he said. "My hat! I thought that beast had me. I bet I shall dream about it for weeks. Did you see the arms of him—and the horrible green eyes? Ugh! I've heard tell of them things, but I don't want to see one again, not ever!"

"You'll probably see a great many before you get away from here," said the professor, corking the bottle. Then he held it up and let the sunlight play on it. "Glad I didn't pitch it overboard," he mused, addressing no one in particular. "As a drink it is poison, but in a case like this—yes, I think I was justified."

"Of course you were," Dr. Bastable agreed heartily, pleased to see that the old gentleman seemed quite sane again, despite the fact that he was still wearing the absurd and piratical attire in which he had first greeted them. "It was a lucky thing that you happened to have the stuff. I suppose it was in the captain's medical stores. By the way, professor, when we have a little more leisure perhaps you will tell me your story. There are many questions I want to ask you. But first I must get into communication with my yacht. Luckily I brought a portable transmitter with me, and, still more luckily, the two youngsters brought it aboard and did not leave it in the boat."

"Ah, wireless!" said the old professor, his face lighting up. "Do you chance to know anything about wireless? I have rigged up a sending apparatus. Made it out of material I found in the hold. I don't think it is much good, though. For one thing, though I remembered the theory of the matter from what I read, I do not know the way to send in the code that telegraphists use. Even if I managed to send out any signals, I doubt if they could possibly be understood. All I could do was to send out dots and dashes, hoping that someone would hear them and come to find out what they were intended to mean."

"Yes, we heard you, and I have just been looking at your apparatus," said Dr. Bastable, with a friendly smile. "In fact, the two youngsters and I were examining it when that squid attacked the boat. I shall be most pleased if you will come and explain it to me whilst my daughter and nephew fix up our own apparatus."

Professor Langley seemed delighted and led the way to the cabin in which his send-

ing set was installed, almost dancing along the deck as he went.

"It was something of a feat! I think you will admit that it was something of a feat to construct a transmitter that would work—you did hear my signals, didn't you?" The old man interjected this last question with almost a piteous look in his eyes.

"Yes, we heard your signals right enough," said Dr. Bastable. "In fact, we wondered who on earth it could be sending out such rubbish. It did sound rubbish, you know."

"Everybody ought to learn the code, the telegraphist's code—the Morse code, I think it is called," continued the old gentleman. "But, as I was saying, I think you will admit that it was something of a feat to make a sending set out of bits and odds and ends of electrical apparatus I found in the cargo, with not a book nor a diagram to aid me, mind you. I just had to depend on my memory. I was getting nearly mad with desperation, beginning to think that I should never be rescued, when the idea came to me. I think it saved my reason."

He gave Dr. Bastable a curious, sidelong look as he spoke, as though he was not quite sure that his reason had been saved.

"There is nothing like work for taking a man's mind off his troubles," Dr. Bastable agreed. "But how long ago was it that you made this apparatus?"

They were in the cabin now, and the old professor bent over his transmitter lovingly, fingering the clumsy coils and ill-made fitments as though they were some of Marconi's very best work.

"About two years ago, it might be," he muttered. "I don't seem to remember very well. But I know that I have sent out at least one of my calls every day. Nobody has answered them, except a lot of pirates. Pirates seemed to come every day. Or was it—did I dream about the pirates? Since you have come it seems to me that perhaps I have been a little mad lately—imagining things, you know."

"You have just been reading a great deal about pirates, that is all it is, professor," said Dr. Bastable, reassuringly. "Now tell me about this gear."

"It was this big spark coil first gave me the idea," said Professor Langley. "You see, when the boat I was on, returning from America, ran into an iceberg, I was thrown into the water along with most of the others. She went down to the bottom in five minutes. I drifted about for a long time in the fog and darkness, hearing cries and yells and groans all around me, but able to do nothing. After a bit some wreckage floated by and I was able to support myself on that. Presently I saw a boat and hailed her. There was no answer. I pushed my wreckage to her and clambered in. There was not a soul in her, but she was well provisioned and watered. I lived in her for days and days—for weeks, I think—until I drifted to this ship. Again I thought that I had come to human help. Alas! Like the boat, the ship was deserted. Not a soul was on her, not a sign to tell when or why or how they had gone."

"We shall never find out that, I fear," Dr. Bastable interjected quietly, watching Joan and Roger connecting up the portable transmitting set to the old man's makeshift aerial. They pretended to be very busy, but all the time their ears were wide open to catch the professor's marvellous story of his adventure.

"Though in some ways I was unlucky, yet in others I was very lucky, I suppose," he continued. "There was food in plenty on this ship. Good sound biscuits in sealed tins, tinned meats by the ton, and all sorts and conditions of things. It is a regular Robinson Crusoe's ship. There were seeds, too. I was able to grow green salads on wet blankets, and later on I collected rotting seaweed and refuse from about the ship and made a garden in the forepart of the ship, where I grew more extensively. Water was my main difficulty, but I rigged up sails and tarpaulins so that I could catch rain water and lead it to the tanks. I soon found that I should be able to live here. What I began to fear, before many months had gone by, was that I should die here, too."

"Yes, I am sure that the loneliness must have been the worst part," Dr. Bastable agreed. "And so you made this very clever transmitting set to try and call help?"

"I was rummaging about in the hold, an occupation I reserved for times when I became fairly desperate with loneliness and despair, when I came on cases and cases of electrical toys and small goods. In one of the cases I found this coil. Then the great idea came to me. I rushed on deck

and sat down straight away to think out all I knew and to make drawings. Such things as I couldn't find in the hold I filed out of solid metal with an old file I found in the sailmaker's store. I worked for weeks, and at last I had everything fitted up. It was only then, when I pressed the key and saw the sparks fly between the points of the spark gap, that I remembered that I did not know the Morse code. First of all I was mad with rage. Then I sunk to the depths of despair. Then another mad fit took me and I tore about all over the ship searching everywhere in the hope that somewhere or other I should find a book telling me the secret of the code. All I found was a great bundle of boys' books in the forecastle. Paper-backed things they were, trashy stuff, but all I had to read. They have been a great comfort to me. I have read them all through many times. I rather like them, particularly the ones about Billy Bones the Pirate."

As he mentioned the name of the pirate hero of the books he had been reading the mad light came back again into the professor's eyes. He rose to his feet and felt in his waist-belt for his sword.

Dr. Bastable laid his hand friendly-wise on his arm, pulling him gently back into his seat by the table.

"It seems really marvellous to me, professor, that one having no knowledge of wireless matters, other than that which has come from casual reading, should have been able to put together so efficient a piece of apparatus," he said, affecting not to notice the change that had come over the old man. "It is more marvellous still that it should have been made out of odds and ends of things not really adapted for the work. But the most marvellous thing of all is that it should have worked. Now, what I want to know is how you generated the electricity to work your sparking coil. That seems to me the greatest difficulty of all."

Slowly the eyes of the old professor lost their mad look. He settled down to the table again, and then pointing underneath it indicated a part of a sewing-machine treadle. This was connected by a leather band to a covered box on the table.

"Yes, it puzzled me for a long time," he agreed. "Then I discovered a small dynamo. I knew enough of electricity to be aware that if I could only turn it round fast enough I should generate electricity. I hunted about in the holds until I was lucky enough to come on some sewing-machines. As you see, the treadle of one of them serves to revolve the dynamo sufficiently fast to give me enough power for my purpose. So you think my work is good?"

"As an expert in wireless I can truthfully say that I think you have done wonders, professor," Dr. Bastable assured him. "I believe that if you had known the Morse code you would have succeeded in bringing help long ago. The trouble is that as you have arranged things you are not sending out signals on the wave-length usually used by ships, or you might have got help by means of the signals you did send out. Most ship wireless traffic is on a wave-length of six hundred metres, you know."

"But I don't quite understand," said the professor, with a puzzled frown.

"You have to tune the waves you send out, like tuning a piano—give the waves a certain—well—pitch, let us call it. The listening station also tunes to the same pitch, and only when the two stations are in tune can they communicate with one another."

"Yes, yes. I had forgotten, but I remember now," sighed the professor. "It is just the lack of a little exact knowledge that has kept me a prisoner here so long. I suppose it must be years since I was thrown into the water from that wreck. Many things must have happened, many things. I have been given up for dead, of course."

Dr. Bastable nodded and then rose and went to his own portable set which had been awaiting him for some time.

"We will get the news of your rescue to London just as quickly as we can. I have powerful apparatus on my yacht. I will tell my operator the marvellous story and bid him tell the world."

"And then you will take me home," said Professor Langley contentedly. He looked at his gay attire as he spoke and shuddered. "I wonder what made me dress myself like this?" he asked. "I suppose my clothes got more and more ragged and I dressed in what I could find. But I don't seem to remember, somehow. There are a lot of things I forget."

Dr. Bastable said nothing on that subject, though he thought that it was perhaps a mercy that the poor old man did forget the madness that had claimed him.

"We have a tough job before us, I fear," he told Roger and Joan. "Now that the boat is gone we shall have to get the *Radio* to come to us. That means that Trevallen will have to get the propeller cleared and then devise some means of keeping the weed away from it whilst he cuts a path to us. I dare not risk one of our other boats now that I know that those sea-devils are about. That fellow who attacked Charlie Wood just now, or others of his kind, may be lurking under the weed ready to spring like some dreadful tiger. It was a mercy that we got here safely. Now I am going to call the yacht and tell them what has happened. Trevallen will be getting anxious, I fear."

He made some small adjustments to the set and then sat down to the "key," the old professor approaching and watching him eagerly.

The key hardly seemed to move under the pressure of the scientist's expert fingers. It was finely set and the merest trembling of his hand and a flickering in the valve was all that told that a long message was being flashed out. For about ten minutes Dr. Bastable sent out a constant stream of dots and dashes. Then he made the "end of message" signal and switched over to hear the yacht's reply.

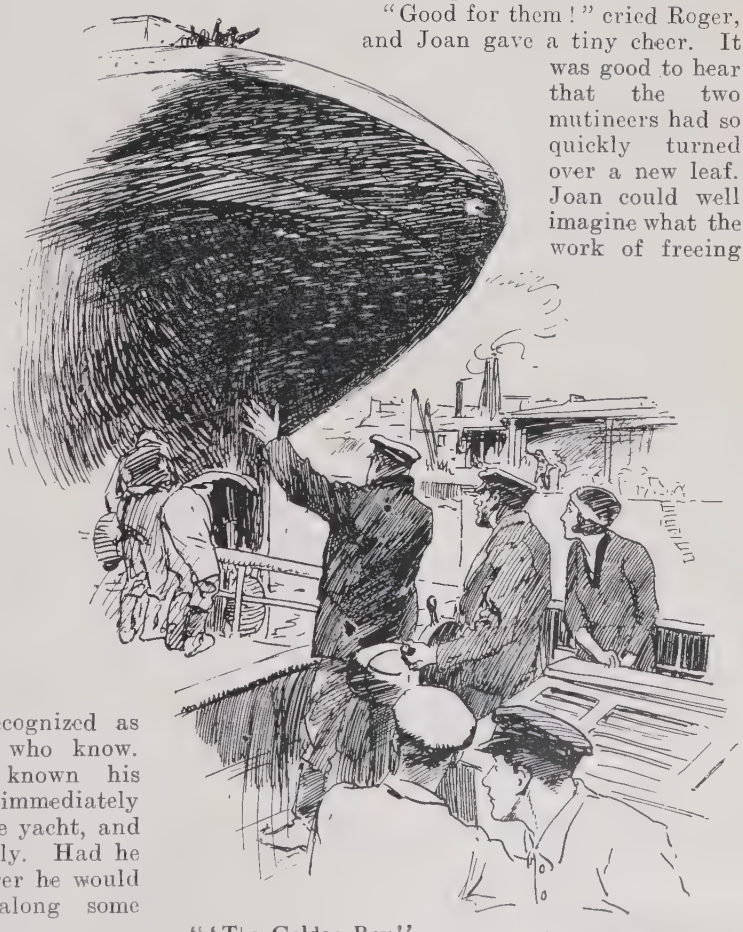
"O K" came Jimmy Sparks' well-known signals. Wireless operators who are acquainted with one another can usually recognize each other by their methods of ending. Morse can be almost as easily recognized as handwriting by those who know. Jimmy Sparks had known his "owner" was at the key immediately he heard him calling the yacht, and so he replied respectfully. Had he recognized Joan or Roger he would probably have sent along some joking message or other.

"He has gone to report to the skipper now," explained Dr. Bastable. "He will be back with news in a few moments, I expect. Ah! here he is."

He took up his pencil and reached for a pad of message forms that was tied to the instrument. For some minutes he wrote rapidly, as he translated the dots and dashes that Jimmy Sparks was rattling out in the wireless cabin of the yacht. Then he switched over to send, tapped out a short acknowledgment, and took up his sheaf of message forms.

"No need to read all of this," he told them. "I'll just give you the gist of it. First of all the *Radio's* propellers are clear of weed. That was the work of Smith and Grumbles. The pair of them volunteered to dive over with knives and see what could be done. They stuck to it pluckily, and, after about two hours of real hard work, they were able to report that the yacht was clear again."

"Good for them!" cried Roger, and Joan gave a tiny cheer. It was good to hear that the two mutineers had so quickly turned over a new leaf. Joan could well imagine what the work of freeing



"'The Golden Ray!' he cried"

the screws must have been like, and her heart warmed to the two men she had at first disliked.

"The other news is that the Golden Ray has been playing tricks again. The yacht has had an urgent message from the Government at home saying that I am to 'use every endeavour to trace the origin of the Ray,' and that I am to call for any assistance I may need. I can call on any British warship. They all have orders to help me if I want help."

"But, of course, you will do your best. They wouldn't have sent you out if they didn't know that you would stick to it until you did find out all about it," said Joan. "What do they want to waste time sending messages like that for?"

"That is just a little way that Governments have," her father explained with a smile. "Translated in plain English that message means 'get along with your job. You don't seem to be doing much! Hadn't you better get someone to help you?'"

"Well knowing that such a message will make you all the more determined to make a success of it by yourself," laughed Roger. "Very cunning of them, uncle. But I wish you had been there to reply."

"I should have done precisely what Trevallen has done," said Dr. Bastable. "I should just have acknowledged the message and made no comment. You are not supposed to answer back when you get such messages."

A few minutes later the ship and the yacht were in communication again, and those on the ship learned, to their relief, that the yacht was having a protecting netting fixed round its stern, and that in about a couple of hours it would start to cut its way through the lane opened by the small boat earlier in the day. It would be night time by then, but Dr. Bastable promised to have some kind of a light on the ship to act as a guiding beacon.

Sure that if pluck and determination could win the yacht to the ship, the little band of adventurers made the best of the time remaining to them on that ship of mystery. Professor Langley, leaving his madness further and further behind the longer he talked with his rescuers, discarded his pirate's costume and donned more respectable attire. Then he cooked them a splendid meal, the last, he hoped, that he would eat on what had been his prison for so many years. He fed the cooking fire with the tales of wild adventure that had served him so ill a turn, greatly to the distress of the members of the boat's crew, who would have liked to have read them.

The meal over, all but Dr. Bastable settled down to sleep and await the coming of the yacht.

CHAPTER VIII

Through the Panama Canal

"THOSE are the lights of Colon, at the mouth of the Panama Canal," said Dr. Bastable, as he and the two youngsters stood on the little bridge of the *Radio*, whither they had been summoned by Captain Trevallen, that they might see a sight that is held to be well worth the seeing by travellers who have witnessed it.

It was indeed a picture of unmatched beauty that met their eyes as the cool dawn wind ruffled the calm waters of the "Spanish Main." Behind them the dawn showed faintly, painting the eastern horizon with palest lilac, save where a few fleecy clouds flamed to greet the coming sun. Before them the lights of the busy port twinkled like a basket full of jewels, rubies and amethysts here and there, but mostly points of diamond fire. The Isthmus of Darien, over which Drake had first spied out the rich waters of the Pacific Ocean, lay like a velvet cloud before them.

Out of the darkness a lone bird came winging to greet the day. Once or twice it circled round the little yacht, as though inquiring what might be its business, and then made off eastwards.

The dawn wind fluttered and died down. Joan shivered and drew her coat more closely round her. Save for the hum of the engines there was not a sound to be heard. It was almost as though they were floating through a fairy sea into the land of dreams.

Then a warm wind swept off the land to meet them. It was scented as though it had swept over acres and acres of flowers. And then, with a suddenness that took their breath away, it was broad day.

"The coast has improved a bit down this way since the Yanks built the canal and decided to clean it up and make it healthy," said Captain Trevallen. "Usen't to smell of flowers in the old days. A dirty cowyard would better fit it. The Yanks certainly have made some improvements.

Used to be a regular fever swamp. Now fever is unknown, and white people can live there in comfort."

"Well, we shall be going through the canal and we shall be able to see all these marvels with our own eyes," said Dr. Bastable. "We shall be in the Pacific in about three days' time, if all goes well, youngsters, and if I don't run this ray to earth somewhere on the coast here."

Four days had gone by since the *Radio* had cut its way to the derelict ship and had taken them off, four lazy days during which they had run through the West Indies and had dreamed dreams of the bad old days when pirates ruled that part of the world. They had not mentioned the pirates, though, because of the old professor, who was improving every day now that he was on the way back to civilization. He seemed to wish to talk of everything but the years he had spent as a prisoner of the Sargasso Sea, and they had respected his wish. He had developed an amazing thirst for knowledge and seemed quite cross sometimes when they could not tell him of scientific developments in which he was interested.

Wireless fascinated him, and he was never so pleased as when he could get Bob Salters or Jimmy Sparks or Joan and Roger into the wireless cabin there to answer his questions and demonstrate the enormous progress that wireless had made even in so short a time as three years. He had never heard wireless telephony, and, when they picked up a concert from one of the South American cities, that seemed to him to be the greatest marvel of all.

The lights of Colon went out with the coming of day, and as they drew near they found it to be a clean and prosperous modern port with very little to tell of the grimy past from which it had been rescued by the courage and imagination of the engineers who had built that wonderful canal that joins the two great oceans of the world.

They pushed their way into the harbour and came to anchor, having tracked the Golden Ray right across the Atlantic without being any nearer to a solution of the mystery of its origin.

There was much to be done, for not only had the stores to be replenished, but Captain Trevallen had to get his permits and instructions for taking the yacht through the long succession of locks, up over the hump in the middle of the narrow neck of land, and down into the Pacific on the other side. The youngsters studied maps of the canal and were amazed to find that when they reached the Pacific they would be some miles farther to the east than they were in the city of Colon. This is because the canal is not cut right across the isthmus from east to west, but takes a course a little to the east of due south. It had to be cut that way because that was the easiest route.

At last all preparations were made and they started, in company with two great steamers, to make the fascinating journey. The first lock was soon reached. The huge gates were wide open to take them in. When they had steamed in the gates closed behind them, moved by powerful machinery, and then the water was let in from above, so that very slowly they rose and rose until they were level with the higher stretch of the canal beyond. Then the further pair of gates opened and let them out.

"There are fifty miles of this," Tom Allen told them. "Fifty miles before we shall sight the open sea again."

"Not fifty miles of locks, surely?" asked Roger, who began to wish that he had studied his geography books a little more closely. He very much wanted to understand all the wonderful things he saw about him on every hand.

"No, only about six locks, I fancy; but I have not been through before," was the mate's answer. "There are three locks here, one somewhere about the middle, and two at the other end. Hallo, here we are at the second lock already. Run 'em pretty close together, don't they?"

"We go up about eighty-five feet in less than a mile," said the old professor, and proceeded to lecture them on the canal, about which he seemed to have a really amazing fund of knowledge. He explained that he had been through on one of the very first boats that ever made the complete passage.

They entered the second lock just as they had done the first; but now something of the novelty had gone from the business and they all settled down for a dreary wait until they should reach the upper level and have something to look at more interesting than the massive stone walls of the lock and their two companion steamers.

Suddenly, from the lock sides, there

came a sound of shouting. Loud warnings were yelled in a foreign tongue and men ran and waved their arms wildly.

The water seemed to be coming in more quickly than it had done in the first lock, and the little *Radio* began to rock violently. They saw that the bigger steamers were also swaying and straining at the great hawsers that held them to the side of the lock.

Something had gone wrong. There was no doubt about that. The pilot standing with Captain Trevallen on the bridge seemed calm enough, and so they were not frightened. They found out afterwards that the man was stricken dumb with fear and could neither do anything nor say anything.

It was Tom Allen who first sensed that there was a real danger.

"I believe something has broken in the gate machinery and the water is pouring in too fast. If the hawsers of one of those big ships break she will be swept backwards and dash through the gate behind us. She'll grind us into powder as she goes!"

Those on the two big steamers had seen the danger even as Tom Allen voiced his fears. There was hurry and bustle on their decks as other great hawsers were got ready to pass to men on the lock side. If the worst happened and one of them broke loose and crashed through the gates, the whole of the water from the lock, and very likely the water from the other lock and the great lake beyond, would be let loose. It would sweep downwards with a mighty roar, ruining in a few moments work that had taken many, many years to complete and cost many millions of money.

Suddenly there was a crack like a rifle shot. They saw the parted hawser of one of the ships curl broken into the air, flying like a whip-lash. At the same instant the little *Radio* surged and swayed to a sudden heavier rush of water.

With fear-strained eyes they watched the great ship bearing down on them. Then Dr. Bastable lifted his hand and pointed to the aerial that hung from the masts of the vessel.

"The Golden Ray! The Golden Ray again!" he cried. "It is the Golden Ray that has caused this disaster."

(To be concluded)

A dog's life—on the Norfolk Broads

(Photo: Castle Film Co.)

The Sealed Envelope

Two Schoolgirls—and a Detective

By Dora Martin

MONICA FEYNING turned her book face downwards on her lap.

"What an awful din!"

Patsy, sitting in the opposite corner of the railway carriage, looked up from her irregular French verbs and nodded, then down went her head and her lips moved as she muttered indistinctly to herself.

Monica turned her head and glanced carelessly across the platform to where the noise was coming from. The two men on whom her eyes rested were engaged in a violent altercation which was cut short by the guard, who blew his whistle; and Monica drew in her sprawly, lanky legs quickly as the taller of the two men sprang hastily into their carriage, slammed the door and held the handle to prevent his companion's entrance. When the train had gathered speed, he took the corner seat at the other end of the carriage and settled himself comfortably.

Patsy and Monica looked at each other with raised eyebrows between furtive glances at their fellow-traveller, and each time their eyes met after one of these glances their eyebrows were a little higher.

He took a large envelope from his pocket and held it thoughtfully in his hand a moment before slipping it into a black leather wallet which lay on the seat beside him.

By the time the train had passed the next station Patsy was again lost in the intricacies of irregular verbs, so that she was quite startled when a short time afterwards the strange man moved towards the door, opened it, and stepped out on to the platform

"Why, we're here, and I haven't learnt half!" she exclaimed. "And we're—hallo, what is it?"

"Look! It must have slipped out of that wallet. What shall I do? Where is he?" and Monica stood looking anxiously about for the tall man, holding the bulky sealed envelope in her hand. But not a glimpse could she see of his light tweed coat.

"Are you looking for anybody?"

Monica turned in surprise and recognized the man with whom their fellow-traveller had been quarrelling.

"Yes—I have just found this letter, and I can't see the man who dropped it."

"If you like I can give it to him; I know where he lives. You see, I saw him get into your carriage, so we must mean the same person." He smiled at her. "Shall I take it?"

Monica received an emphatic knock on her funnybone and turned.

"Sorry, Monica, nearly dropped my book." Patsy gave her head a slight shake and frowned at her chum. "Shall I put the letter in my case?" she went on sweetly, "and Monica, we shall have to hurry or we'll be late."

"I think, perhaps——" Monica paused as the stranger stretched out his hand just a trifle too eagerly for the bulky envelope. "Thank you very much, but I think perhaps I'd better keep it. It may be valuable, you see, and I should worry if I didn't give it back to him myself. I'll tell you what you *can* do, though," she added hurriedly as she saw him frown angrily; "when you see him tell him my address. Here it is: Monica Feyning, Stanfield House School. Then, you see, he can easily come up and get it. I'll take great care of it."

She smiled a trifle nervously, and both girls were relieved when they had left the station and were walking hurriedly towards the school.

"D'you think he'll come? I wonder what it can have inside? I'm glad you banged me, Pat, for I believe I should have given it to him."

"Why did you give him the school address and not your own?" inquired Pat, a trifle curiously.

"It didn't dawn on me to give him any other. What a donkey I am! Suppose he calls when we've gone home?" and she stood still to consider this new complication until Pat caught her arm and gave it a little shake.

"We simply *must* hurry—and there you stand as if we'd all day Bother the letter,

he should be more careful! You've done your best, and all you've to do now is to take care of it till he calls for it. I'll race you to Elmhurst Avenue."

Stanfield House School was a comparatively new building with wide window spaces and lofty rooms. An ideal school it was called in the prospectus, and so it was. Most of the girls were boarders, but day girls attended too, and as these often came by train, as in the case of Patsy Deverill and Monica, they were allowed ten minutes' grace in the mornings and were not expected to be in their form rooms until twenty minutes to ten. Generally this extra time was not needed, but this morning Patsy and Monica were very glad of it. In the hurry and bustle of taking off coats and changing shoes the incident of the mysterious envelope was forgotten, and it lay unheeded in Monica's case.

Although they were not boarders, the two girls shared, as it were, the dormitory used by the others in their form. They had a cupboard in which they kept their brushes, combs, gym tunics, sweaters, etc., and were thus entitled to speak of "our dorm."

During break there was a meeting of their form to discuss the silver cup which they had planned to present to the school, to award to the victor of the yearly swimming contest, and for a short time before the meeting commenced there were hurried peeps into purses and a general inspection of the contents of their various pockets. A shade of gloom settled over the room.

"Of course, we must get a decent one——" Kitty Strange paused, and her brown eyes searched the faces around her.

"Of course!" they chorused.

"The thing is—have we enough money to get it?"

"Wouldn't it be better if we found out the price and then see if we could manage it?" queried Ethel Swanne, the fuzzy-haired cricket captain.

"I should think we'd better see how much we can collect, and then——"

"Yes, Monica—that's the best plan. Now, how much have we got? Gather up your coins, *mes amies*, and pool them. No disorderly behaviour in the rear—if you *are* so wealthy and anxious to get rid of your tin, you need not make so much fuss about it."

Amidst much laughing the little pile of coppers and silver grew.

"If only we'd saved a certain amount a week——"

"And if only it wasn't so near end of term——" groaned Patsy, as they watched with anxious eyes while Kitty counted.

"Only five—no, six shillings!" She looked at them in dismay.

The bell rang and there was a general move towards the door.

"We've got a week to collect the rest—put your backs into it, and it might be done," was Kitty's parting shot.

And with this problem to solve, it is not to be wondered at that the mysterious envelope lay unheeded at the bottom of Monica's case.

It was not until the end of the afternoon that the incident at the railway station was brought back to her.

She had just been up to the dorm, and was on the point of running downstairs again when she turned at the sound of Miss Maitland's voice.

"Monica—this gentleman tells me he knows you slightly, and as his daughter is probably coming here next term you may like to talk to him."

"Yes——" murmured Monica politely; but all the time her brain was spinning while she tried to still the questions that clamoured for answers. The man was he who had offered to return the envelope to its rightful owner. But why—she asked herself—why hadn't he said something about his daughter when he heard the name of the school that morning?

At that moment Miss Maitland was called away, and told Monica that perhaps Mr. Denly might like her to show him the rooms he had not already seen. He agreed at once, and they set off on a tour of inspection—Monica very quiet and Mr. Denly taking note of everything.

"And this," remarked Monica, "is my dorm." She opened the door, and he looked round with an appraising glance.

"Very nice, very nice. Balcony, too, eh?" He turned from the window. "You are a lucky little girl to have such a beautiful school."

"Yes," replied Monica, without enthusiasm. Not that she wasn't immensely proud of her school—she was; but she didn't care to discuss it with Mr. Denly.

"Have you seen your friend yet about the letter—you know?" asked Monica, as they walked downstairs.

"My *friend!*" He laughed, then went on

in his usual tone: "No, not yet; are you sure you haven't changed your mind about letting me give it to him?"

"Quite; besides, I've put it away safely."

"I see—I see. Well, I expect you won't have to mind it for very long. Good-bye," and with that he left her and entered Miss Maitland's study.

Monica, thus reminded of her find, took it from her case and examined it carefully. It was of very thick paper, unaddressed, and was heavily sealed. The contents crackled slightly. Looking at it brought no enlightenment, so in her case it went once more, and home with her in the company of her numerous prep. books.

* * *

The next morning, as Patsy and Monica approached the school from the station, swinging their cases and chattering volubly as they walked briskly along, they were surprised to see a policeman leave the school gates, tucking his notebook in his pocket.

"Hallo! What's the matter?"

"I suppose he *did* come out of our gate, Patsy?"

"Rather! Oh, I do hope something thrilling has happened—nothing horrid, you know, but anything for excitement."

By this time they were almost on a level with the policeman, and as they passed their eyes searched his face for any signs of disturbance, but they could see none, and soon they heard him whistling.

"Can't be much, anyhow, can it?" remarked Monica when she heard him.

"Ah!" and Patsy shook her head wisely. "Of course, they get used to all sorts of things, so it doesn't affect them. But do let's dash and find out."

They dashed.

In the corridor groups of girls whispered excitedly together, and as the two train girls walked towards their form room:

"Don't you know?"

"Haven't you heard?" met them on all sides.

But they preferred to hear the news from their own chums, and rushing into their room:

"What has happened—why this excitement?" gasped Monica.

"Such horrors! We've had burglars!"

"Burglars?"

"Yes, burglars!"

"Ssh! Don't shout so, Kitty!"

"The two men on whom her eyes rested were engaged in a violent altercation"

Drawn by Jack M. Faulks

"But—where—when?"

"Here, of course, donkey! And it all happened last night. The thrilling thing is, though, that it was only our dorm. they honoured, and——"

"Yes," Joan Duncan interrupted eagerly, "and turned out all our drawers and cupboards and left everything in a most unholy mess."

"But didn't any of you hear them?—you must sleep like dead chickens! Now, if only you'd been sensible, you could have caught him—or them, whoever they were. But what—why should they come to a school?"

Kitty shrugged her shoulders.

"Anyway, they came, and we've got to clear up the muddle. Do come and help, you two. Of course, we've had the police in," she continued, as they walked upstairs, "but they can't find anything, and they don't know who the burglars were. I jolly well hope they won't pay us an-

other visit. The funny thing is, though, that he made a special shot at our writing-cases, and the floor's simply strewn with letters."

"Letters?" Monica's thoughts flew to her own precious envelope. Could it be—no, of course not! And yet he had wanted it very much; had been very anxious for her to let him have it. And he thought that it was in there—of course! She suddenly remembered that she had told him it was her dorm., and if she had been a boarder she certainly would have put it away in one of her drawers.

She said nothing about the letter to the others, but when Patsy appeared on the scene she caught her arm and pulled her into a corner, where, with heads bent together and in low whispers, they discussed the matter.

"It's absolutely rotten luck that we haven't a shred of proof whether it was our man or not, isn't it? Now, if only one of the idiots had caught even a tiny glimpse of him we might have known. But what *am* I to do about the wretched thing?" ended Monica.

"Give him—let's see, this is Tuesday. Give him till Friday to call for it, and if he hasn't arrived we'll open it together. Some address might be inside."

"M-m-m-m—Help! Mercy! All right, Kitty, we'll help!" called Patsy, as the irate boarders pounced on the two slackers, and for the next half an hour they were kept fully occupied tidying the drawers and cupboards, and removing all traces of their unwelcome visitor.

During the lunch-hour Miss Duncan asked Monica if she would take a note to the Melrose Abbey School, making the final arrangements for a tennis tournament which was to be held between the two schools. As it meant that she would miss part of the maths. lesson, Monica set forth joyfully, delivered her message, and started back again with the reply.

"Flowers, missie?"

"No, thank you."

"Lovely flowers, missie. The last bunch. I'll let 'em go for ninepence, though it's givin' 'em away, that it is."

"No, thank you, I really don't want any," and Monica hurried on.

The whining voice followed her, and in desperation, on hearing that (though it meant throwing them away) she could have them for sixpence, she took out her purse and parted reluctantly with the money, consoling herself with the thought that she could give the flowers to her mother when she went home in the evening.

"'Ere's some damp moss, missie; it'll keep 'em fine and fresh, and with this round it"—she tore a page from a daily newspaper—"you'll do. Thank you, missie."

Monica reached the school and gave Miss Duncan the note; then she set about putting the flowers in water. As she unrolled the newspaper which the woman had wrapped round the ends of the stalks her eye caught the personal column, with its various appeals, amusing and otherwise, and standing there she glanced casually down it, as anyone would who knew that maths. awaited her.

Suddenly she frowned, and held the paper nearer.

"Goodness! It must be—why, it *must* be!" And, taking a stubby pencil out of her pocket, she copied the advertisement carefully.

"What a pity he only gives a box number," she sighed. "Of course, that means I shall have to write. Well, Pat must help." And, flushed with excitement, she stowed the address in her pocket and proceeded to the form room.

Although during the short part of the maths. lesson that remained, and throughout the whole of the prep. that followed it, Monica roused Patsy's curiosity by her nods, smiles, and general air of suppressed excitement, it was not until four o'clock, when lessons stopped, that she had her first opportunity of catching Patsy, and then she drew her aside and gave her the scrap of paper with the advertisement scribbled on it. Patsy read it through, then frowned and looked puzzled.

"I don't quite see——"

"I copied it out of a paper—personal column. See now?" Monica bent over the paper eagerly, and with shaking finger dabbed at the words.

"But what on earth has it—oh!" Light dawned and Patsy's excitement equalled Monica's.

"Jolly good! What ripping luck! You must write to-night, you simply must. And I wonder what the reward will be? Let's make the letter up now. We've lost the 4.19, so we shall have to wait till five o'clock. Come on!" And she set about preparations for this great task.

It took them quite a long time to write this letter, for you must understand that

though they both felt absolutely certain that the lost letter must be the one they had found, yet they thought it necessary to give a minute and detailed description, which they did after another careful examination which revealed no more than they already knew—which was nothing. However, the letter was composed, and with various alterations and hurried ruffling of dictionary pages, it was written, and posted with due solemnity on their way to the station.

Monica hardly slept that night, and the next morning alarmed her family by her unusual behaviour. For one thing she was first in the bathroom, an unheard-of thing, and was ready for breakfast a quarter of an hour too soon; and yet when it arrived she merely sat and looked at the clock and consumed a breakfast which would have suited a good-sized mouse.

Although she knew there would be no letter at the school, she met Patsy in the highest of spirits, and they journeyed in a state of suspense. Once at school, lessons sobered them a little, but it was obvious that Monica's attention was far from her books. Every time a footstep sounded on the gravel of the drive her heart thudded, and she would sit with eyes fixed expectant on the door waiting a summons to see a gentleman who would most surely call some time during the day. Surely he would——

"Monica!"

The culprit started, and under Miss Duncan's frowning eyes made an effort to concentrate. Steps along the gravel. She glanced at Patsy. A pause. How loud one's heart can beat and yet others not hear it! Steps along the corridor; the handle turned

"A gentleman to see——"

"Will you excuse me, Miss Duncan?" gasped Monica, rising before the maid had even announced who the caller had come to see; and she set off down the corridor to the small room where the girls saw their relations when they paid chance visits during the term.

"How do you do, Miss Feyning?"

She liked him and smiled.

"I received your letter this morning answering my advertisement, and came along as soon as I could. Have you the envelope here?"

"I can get it in one minute; it's in my case. I shall be quite glad for you to take it, because I've worried since the burglar——"

"Burglar?"

"Yes." And she told him of the incident.

When she had finished speaking, her visitor took her letter from his pocket, and

"'Wait a minute,' he said hastily. 'Now I'll tell you all about it'" *Drawn by Jack M. Faulks*

with it another one which he passed over for her to read.

"It came by the same post as yours," he explained.

She read it and was puzzled. It was to tell Mr. Coombs that the writer knew where the missing envelope was, and that on receipt of a suitable reward he would pass on the information.

Monica looked at him.

"Only one other person knew where it was, because I told him myself," she said, "and——"

He nodded.

"Would you mind getting it for me?"

She ran down the corridor and into the cloakroom, where she had left her case. Taking the envelope, she hurried back.

"Now"—his eyes twinkled—"perhaps you would like to open it——"

"We certainly *did* wonder what was inside," she confessed

"Fire away, then"; and he stood smiling at her while she hesitated, then broke the seal. She gasped, absolutely gasped, with mortification and astonishment when she drew out a wad of crisp but quite valueless paper, and looked up at him in speechless indignation.

"Wait a minute," he said hastily. "Now I'll tell you all about it. I happen to be a detective, and for a long time now I've been trying to get hold of a man who passed his time in stealing valuable papers and documents and waiting until their loss was advertised, when he would claim the reward. Quite a good idea, really. But then I determined I would catch him, and after a lot of hard work I managed to find my man, and the only thing I wanted was absolute proof. Then I planned to catch him with an envelope containing valuable documents." He laughed as he tapped the empty envelope lying on the table. "But for you, though, I should have been caught myself. As it is he wrote that letter I gave you to read. Don't you think £20 is far too much to pay for the contents?"

"Rather!" Monica's eyes sparkled with excitement. "Then it was—he did come—he *was* the burglar? How thrilling! But why were you quarrelling with him on the platform?"

"I wanted to study him well, so made his acquaintance, but then I had to get rid of him, so the best thing to do was to have a disagreement of some sort. These things have to be managed, you know."

"And you've got him?"

"Oh, yes. And now about the promised reward."

Monica opened her mouth to protest, but he waved his hand.

"Remember that if it hadn't been for you my little plan would have gone astray, which would have meant a great disappointment, in addition to the loss of time and money it would have caused. Now, what do you say to—— I'd rather give you a present than money, just as a keepsake, you know, to remind you of this. What shall it be?"

Monica's thoughts flew to the cup they wanted to buy, and she looked at him.

"Well?" he inquired, encouragingly.

"You see—er—well, it's this," and she told him.

"Topping idea, that. I know what we can do. I'll come and help choose it. You bring the money you've collected, and"—Monica held her breath—"and I'll see to the other."

"Oh, thank you. I—I *must* tell Patsy!" And she flew off to fetch her chum, who, as it was break, was available.

Then the three of them discussed the matter, made an appointment with Mr. Coombs to buy the cup, then said goodbye to him.

And if you care to visit Stanfield House School you will see the cup which was presented by the Fourth, and if you happen to run across Monica, who will probably be a prefect and getting quite grown up by this time, she may be persuaded to show you a little brooch which Mr. Coombs declared he had to buy to get rid of the reward money; and, what is more, she *might* tell you all about the mysterious envelope, but somehow I don't think she will.

When You're Playing

By Evelyn Maud Whitaker

When you're playing at the seaside
On the soft smooth sand,
Close beside the swarthy niggers,
With their big brass band;
When you've got a slippery sandwich
Full of cool cream ice,
And you're licking round it slowly
'Cause it tastes too nice:
Then you know life's as it *should* be,
And you know it's as it *would* be
If you had the planning of it all yourself!

When you're sitting in the schoolroom
With your X plus Z,
And the sums are simply swimming
In your heavy hot head,
When the great examination
Finds you faint with fright,
And you know you must keep swotting
Through the next near night:
Then you know life's as it *shouldn't*
And you know it's as it *wouldn't*
Be, if only you could plan it out yourself!

The Pilgrim's Progress

From this World to that which is to come

By John Bunyan

AS I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den,* and laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man clothed with rags standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he break out with a lamentable cry, saying, What must I do to be saved?

I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist coming towards him, who asked, Wherefore dost thou cry?

He answered, Sir, I perceive, by the book in my hand, that I must die and come to judgment; and I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second.

Then said Evangelist, Why not willing to die, since life is attended with so many evils? The man answered, Because I fear that this burden which is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave. And, Sir, I am not fit to go to judgment; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.

Then Evangelist gave him a parchment roll, and there was written therein, "Flee from the wrath to come."

The man therefore read it, and looking upon Evangelist very carefully said, Whither must I fly? Then said Evangelist (pointing with his finger over a very wide field), Do you see yonder wicket-gate? The man said, No. Then said the other, Do you see yonder shining light? He said, I think I do. Then said Evangelist, Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do. So I saw it in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door, when his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man ran on, crying, Life! life! eternal life!

The neighbours also came out to see him run, and as he ran some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return; and amongst those that did so there were two that resolved to fetch him back by force. The name of the one was Obstinate, and the name of the other Pliable.

Now by this time the man was got a good distance from them; but, however, they were resolved to pursue him, which they did, and in a little time they overtook him.

Then said the man, Neighbours, wherefore are ye come? They said, To persuade you to go back with us. But he said, That can by no means be: you dwell, said he, in the City of Destruction, the place also where I was born: I see it to be so; and dying there, sooner or later you will sink lower than the grave; be content, good neighbours, and go along with me!

What! said Obstinate, and leave our friends and our comforts behind us!

Yes, said Christian (for that was his name), because that all is not worthy to be compared with a little of that I am seeking to enjoy; and if you will go along with me, you shall fare as I myself; for where I go is enough and to spare.

Then they asked him what he was leaving all the world to find, and he answered, I seek an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away; and it is laid up in Heaven.

Then said Obstinate, If you will not go back with us, come then, neighbour Pliable, let us turn again and go home without him.

Then said Pliable, Perhaps the things he looks after are better than ours: my heart inclines me to go with my neighbour.

So Obstinate turned back, but Pliable went forward with Christian, and presently they drew nigh to a very miry slough, that was in the midst of the plain; and they, being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. Here, therefore, they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt; and Christian, because of the burden on his back, began to sink in the mire.

At this Pliable began to be angry and afraid, and said, Is this the happiness you have told me all this while of? May I get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave country alone for me! And with that he gave a desperate struggle and got out of the mire; so away he went and Christian saw him no more.

Wherefore, Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone; but still he endeavoured to struggle to that side of the slough that was farthest from his own house, and next to the wicket-gate; the which he did, but could could not get out because of the burden that was

* Referring to the prison in which Bunyan wrote this "dream."

upon his back: but I beheld in my dream, that a man came to him, whose name was Help, and asked him what he did there.

Then Christian told him of Evangelist's words and of his journey.

Then said he, Give me thine hand: so he gave him his hand, and he drew him out and set him upon sound ground, and bid him go on his way.

THE PARABLE OF PASSION AND PATIENCE

Then he went on till he came to the house of the Interpreter, where he knocked, as he had been directed to do. At last one came to the door, and asked who was there.

Sir, said Christian, I am a man that am come from the City of Destruction, and am going to Mount Zion; and I was told that if I called here you would show me excellent things, such as would be helpful to me on my journey.

Then said the Interpreter, Come in; I will show thee that which will be profitable to thee. So he commanded his man to light the candle, and bid Christian follow him.

I saw moreover in my dream, that the Interpreter took him by the hand, and led him into a little room, where sat two little children, each one in his chair. The name of the oldest was Passion, and the name of the other Patience. Passion seemed to be much discontented, but Patience was very quiet. Then Christian asked, What is the reason of the discontent of Passion? The Interpreter answered, The governor of them would have him stay for his best things till the beginning of next year; but he will have all now; while Patience is willing to wait

Then I saw that one came to Passion, and brought him a bag of treasure, and poured it down at his feet; the which he took up and rejoiced therein, and withal laughed Patience to scorn. But I beheld but a while, and he had lavished all away, and had nothing left him but rags.

Then said Christian to the Interpreter, Expound this matter more fully to me.

So he said, These two lads are figures: Passion of the men of this world, and Patience of the men of that which is to come; for as here thou seest, Passion will have all now, this year, that is to say, in this world; so are the men of this world, they must have all their good things now; they cannot stay till the next year, that is, until the next world, for their portion of good. That proverb, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," is of more authority with them than are all the Divine testimonies of the good of the world to come. But as thou sawest that he had quickly lavished all away, and had presently left him nothing but rags, so will it be with all such men at the end of this world.

Then said Christian, Now I see that Patience has the best wisdom, and that upon many accounts. 1. Because he stays for the best things. 2. And also because he will have the glory of his, when the other has nothing but rags.

Nay, you may add another, said the Interpreter, to wit, the glory of the next world will never wear out; but these are suddenly gone.

Then I see it is best to wait for things to come, said Christian.

You say truth; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. Keep all these things so in thy mind, said the Interpreter, that they may be as a goad in thy sides, to prick thee forward in the way thou must go.

Then Christian began to address himself to his journey. Then said the Interpreter, The Comforter be always with thee, good Christian, to guide thee in the way that leads to the city. So Christian went on his way.

Now I saw in my dream, that the highway along which Christian was to go was fenced on either side with a wall, and that wall was called Salvation. Up this way therefore did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back.

He ran thus till he came to a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more.

Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and stood still awhile to look and wonder. Now as he stood looking, behold three Shining Ones came to him, and saluted him with "Peace be to thee." So the first said to him, "Thy sins be forgiven thee"; the second stripped him of his rags, and clothed him with change of raiment; the third also set a mark on his forehead, and gave him a roll with a seal upon it, which he bid him look on as he ran, and that he should give it in at the Celestial gate: so they went their way.

THE PALACE BEAUTIFUL

Then Christian gave three leaps for joy, and went on singing. He went on thus, until he saw, a little out of the way, three men fast asleep, with fetters upon their heels. They were named Simple, Sloth and Presumption.

Christian went to them and cried, You are like them that sleep on the top of a mast, for the dead sea is under you, a gulf that hath no bottom: awake, therefore, and come away; be willing also, and I will help you off with your irons. With that, they looked upon him, and began to reply in this sort: Simple said, I see no danger; Sloth said, Yet a little more sleep; and Presumption said, Every tub must stand upon its own bottom. And so they lay down to sleep again, and Christian went on his way, till, lifting up his eyes, he beheld a very stately

palace before him, the name of which was Beautiful; and it stood just by the highway-side.

So I saw in my dream, that he made haste, and went forward, that if possible he might get lodging there. Now before he had gone far, he entered into a very narrow passage, which was about a furlong off the Porter's lodge, and looking very narrowly before him as he went, he espied two lions in the way. (The lions were chained, but he saw not the chains.) Then he was afraid, and thought also himself to go back after seeing them, for he thought nothing but death was before him. But the Porter at the lodge, whose name was Watchful, perceiving that Christian made a halt, as if he would go back, cried unto him, saying, Is thy strength so small? Fear not the lions, for they are chained, and are placed there for trial of faith where it is, and for discovery of those that have none: keep in the midst of the path, and no hurt shall come unto thee.

Then I saw that he went on trembling for fear of the lions, but taking good heed to the directions of the Porter; he heard them roar, but they did him no harm. Then he clapped his hands, and went on till he came and stood before the gate where the Porter was. Then said Christian to the Porter, Sir, what house is this? and may I lodge here to-night? The Porter answered, This house was built by the Lord of the hill, and he built it for the relief and security of pilgrims.

Then there came out of the door of the house a grave and beautiful damsel named Discretion, and she brought him into the family that dwelt there; and there he passed the night.

Then I saw in my dream, that on the morrow he got up to go forwards, but they desired him to stay till the next day also; and then, said they, we will, if the day be clear, show you the Delectable Mountains; which, they said, would yet further add to his comfort, because they were nearer the desired haven than the place where at present he was; so he consented and stayed. When the morning was up, they had him to the top of the house, and bid him look south. So he did, and behold, at a great distance, he saw a most pleasant, mountainous country, beautified with woods, vineyards, fruits of all sorts, flowers, also with springs and fountains, very delectable to behold. Then Christian asked them the name of that country. They said it was Immanuel's land.

Now he bethought himself of setting forward; but first they took him to the armoury and harnessed him from head to foot with what was of proof, lest perhaps he should meet with assaults in the way. He being therefore thus accoutred with armour, began to go forward; but Discretion, Piety, Charity and Prudence would accompany him to the foot of the hill.

Then said Christian, As it was difficult coming up, so, as far as I can see, it is dangerous going down. Yes, said Prudence, so it is; for it is a hard matter for a man to go down into the Valley of Humiliation, as thou art now, and to catch no slip by the way; therefore, said they, are we come out to accompany thee down the hill. So he began to go down, but very warily; yet he caught a slip or two.

THE FIGHT WITH APOLLYON

Then I saw in my dream, that these good companions, when Christian was gone down to the bottom of the hill, gave him a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine, and a cluster of raisins; and then he went his way.

But now, in this Valley of Humiliation, poor Christian was hard put to it; for he had gone but a little way before he espied a foul fiend coming over the field to meet him; whose name was Apollyon. Then did Christian begin to be afraid, and to cast in his mind whether to go back, or to stand his ground. But he considered again that he had no armour for his back, and therefore thought that to turn the back to him might give him greater advantage with ease to pierce him with his darts; therefore he resolved to venture, and stand his ground; for, thought he, had I no more in mine eye than the saving of my life, it would be the best way to stand.

So he went on, and Apollyon met him. Now the monster was hideous to behold; he was clothed with scales like a fish, and they are his pride; he had wings like a dragon, and feet like a bear, and out of his belly came fire and smoke; and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion. When he came up to Christian, he beheld him with a disdainful countenance, and thus began to question with him.

Whence come you, and whither are you bound?

I am come from the City of Destruction, and I am going to the City of Zion.

By this I perceive that thou art one of my subjects, said Apollyon: for all that country is mine, and I am the prince and god of it. How is it, then, that thou hast run away from thy king? Were it not that I hope that you mayest do me more service, I would strike thee now at one blow to the ground.

Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, Prepare thyself to die; for I swear by my infernal den that thou shalt go no farther. And with that he threw a flaming dart at his breast; but Christian had a shield in his hand, with which he caught it, and so prevented the danger of that.

Then did Christian draw, for he saw it was time to bestir him; and Apollyon fast made at him, throwing darts as thick as hail.

This sore combat lasted for above half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent. For you must know, that Christian, by reason of his wounds, must needs grow weaker and weaker.

Then Apollyon, espying his opportunity, began to gather close to Christian, and

wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian's sword flew out of his hand.

Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now. And with that he had almost pressed him to death; so that Christian began to despair of life.

But, as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching of his last blow, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword, and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound. Christian then made at him again, saying, Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

And with that Apollyon spread forth his dragon's wings and was speedily gone away. And Christian gave thanks to Him that had helped him against Apollyon.

Then there came to him a hand with some of the leaves of the tree of life, which Christian took, and with them healed immediately the wounds he had received in the battle. He also sat down in that place to eat the bread, and to drink of the bottle that was given to him a little before. So, being refreshed, he addressed himself to his journey again, but met with no other danger quite through this valley.

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Now at the end of this valley was another, called the Valley of the Shadow of Death; and Christian must needs go through it, because the way to the Celestial City lay through the midst of it. Now this valley is a very solitary place; the prophet Jeremiah thus describes it: "A wilderness, a land of deserts and pits, a land of drought, and of the Shadow of Death."

I saw then in my dream, as far as this valley reached, there was on my right hand a very deep ditch; the pathway was here also exceedingly narrow; and therefore Christian was the more put to it; for when he sought, in the dark, to shun the ditch on the one side, he was ready to tip over into the mire on the other; also if he sought to escape the mire, without great carefulness he would be ready to fall into the ditch. Thus he went on, and I heard him sigh bitterly; for besides the danger already mentioned, the pathway was here so dark, that oft-times when he lifted up his foot to go forward, he knew not where or upon what he should set it next.

When Christian had travelled in this disconsolate condition some considerable time, he thought he heard the voice of a man, as going before him, saying, "Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." Then was he glad; because he found that some one who feared God was in the valley, besides himself; and he perceived that God was with them, even in that dark and dismal place; and also he hoped to have company by and by. Then he called to him that was before; and presently the day broke; and Christian said, He hath turned the shadow of death into the morning.

Now as Christian went on his way, he came to a little ascent, which was cast up on purpose that pilgrims might see before them: up there, therefore, Christian went; and looking forward, he saw Faithful before him upon his journey. Then said Christian aloud, Ho, ho, so-ho; stay, and I will be your companion. At that Faithful looked behind him; to whom Christian cried again, Stay, stay, till I come up to you.

Then I saw in my dream, they went very lovingly on.

CHRISTIAN IN VANITY FAIR

Then I saw in my dream, that they presently saw a town before them, and the name of that town is Vanity; and at the town there is a fair kept, called Vanity Fair. It is kept all the year long. It beareth the name of Vanity Fair because the town where it is kept is lighter than vanity, and also because all that is there sold, or that cometh thither, is vanity, as is the saying of the wise, "All that cometh is vanity."

This fair is no new-erected business, but a thing of ancient standing.

Almost five thousand years ago, there were pilgrims walking to the Celestial City, as these two honest persons are; and Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion, with their companions, perceiving by the path that the pilgrims made, that their way to the city lay through this town of Vanity, they contrived here to set up a fair; a fair wherein should be sold all sorts of vanity, and that it should last all the year long. Therefore at this fair are all such merchandise sold as houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, and delights of all sorts, as silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not.

And moreover at this fair there is at all times to be seen jugglings, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves, and rogues, and that of every kind.

Now these pilgrims, as I said, must needs go through this fair. Well, so they did; but, behold, even as they entered into the fair, all the people in the fair were moved, and the town itself, as it were, in a hubbub about them, and that for several reasons: For,

First, The pilgrims were clothed with such kind of raiment as was diverse from the raiment of any that traded in that fair. The people, therefore, of the fair made a great gazing upon them; some said they were fools, some they were bedlams, and some they were outlandish men.

Secondly, And as they wondered at their apparel, so they did likewise at their speech; for few could understand what they said. They naturally spoke the language of Canaan; but they that kept the fair were the men of this world. So that from one end of the fair to the

other, they seemed barbarians each to the other.

Thirdly, But that which did not a little amuse the merchandisers was, that these pilgrims set very light by all their wares. They cared not so much as to look upon them; and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears, and cry, Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and look upwards, signifying that their trade and traffic was in heaven.

One chanced mockingly, beholding the carriage of the men, to say unto them, What will ye buy? But they, looking gravely upon him said, We buy the truth. At that, there was an occasion taken to despise the men the more; some mocking, some taunting, some speaking reproachfully, and some calling upon others to smite them.

Therefore they took them and beat them, and besmeared them with dirt, and then put them into the cage, that they might be made a spectacle to all the men of the fair. There, therefore, they lay for some time, and were made the objects of any man's sport, or malice, or revenge; the great ones of the fair laughing still at all that befell them.

But Christian and Faithful behaved themselves wisely, and received the ignominy and shame that was cast upon them with so much meekness and patience, that it won to their side (though but few in comparison of the rest) several of the men in the fair. This put the other party yet into a greater rage, insomuch that they wished for the death of these two men.

THE DEATH OF FAITHFUL

Faithful was, therefore, brought out, to do with him according to their law; and first they scourged him, then they buffeted him, then they lanced his flesh with knives; after that they stoned him with stones; then pricked him with their swords; and last of all, they burned him to ashes at the stake. Thus came Faithful to his end. But as for Christian, he had some respite, and was ordered to be sent to prison; so he there remained for a space. But He who overrules all things, having the power of their rage in His own hand, so wrought it about, that Christian for that time escaped them, and went his way.

I saw in my dream, that Christian went not forth alone; for there was one whose name was Hopeful (being so made by the beholding of Christian and Faithful in their words and behaviour, in their sufferings at the fair), who joined himself unto him, and entering into a brotherly covenant, told him that he would be his companion.

Still as they went on, they wished for a better way. Now a little before them, there was on the left hand of the road a meadow, and a stile to go over into it, and that meadow is called Bypath Meadow. Then said Christian to his fellow, If this meadow lieth along by our way-side, let's go over into it. Then he went to the stile to see, and behold a path lay along by the way on the other side of the fence. It is according to my wish, said Christian; here is the easiest going; come, good Hopeful, and let us go over.

But how if this path should lead us out of the way? asked Hopeful.

That is not likely, said the other. Look, doth it not go along by the way-side? So Hopeful, being persuaded by his fellow, went after him over the stile. When they were gone over, and were got into the path, they found it very easy for their feet; and, withal, they, looking before them, espied a man walking as they did, and his name was Vain-Confidence: so they called after him, and asked him whither that way led. He said to the Celestial gate. Look, said Christian, did not I tell you so? By this you may see we are right. So they followed, and he went before them. But behold the night came on, and it grew very dark; so that they that were behind lost the sight of him that went before.

He therefore that went before (Vain-Confidence by name), not seeing the way before him, fell into a deep pit, which was on purpose there made by the prince of those grounds to catch vainglorious fools withal, and was dashed in pieces with his fall.

Now Christian and his fellow heard him fall. So they called to know the matter, but there was none to answer, only they heard a groaning. Then said Hopeful, Where are we now? Then was his fellow silent, as mistrusting that he had led him out of the way; and now it began to rain, and thunder and lighten in a most dreadful manner, and the water rose amain.

Then they adventured to go back; but it was so dark, and the flood was so high, that in their going back they had like to have been drowned nine or ten times.

Neither could they, with all the skill they had, get again to the stile that night. Wherefore at last, lighting under a little shelter, they sat down there until the day brake; but, being weary, they fell asleep.

GIANT DESPAIR AND DOUBTING CASTLE

Now there was, not far from the place where they lay, a castle, called Doubting Castle, the owner whereof was Giant Despair, and it was in his grounds they now were sleeping: wherefore he, getting up in the morning early, and walking up and down in his fields, caught Christian and Hopeful asleep in his grounds. Then with a grim and surly voice he bid them awake, and asked them whence they were, and what they did in his grounds. They told him they were pilgrims, and that they had lost their way. Then said the giant, You have this night trespassed on me by trampling in and lying on my grounds, and therefore you must go along with me. So they were forced to go,

because he was stronger than they. They also had but little to say, for they knew themselves in a fault. The giant, therefore, drove them before him, and put them into his castle, into a very dark dungeon, nasty, and stinking to the spirits of these two men. Here, then, they lay from Wednesday morning till Saturday night, without one bit of bread or drop of drink, or light, or any to ask how they did.

Now Giant Despair had a wife, and her name was Diffidence: so when he was gone to bed, he told his wife what he had done, to wit, that he had taken a couple of prisoners and cast them into his dungeon for trespassing on his grounds. Then he asked her also what he had best to do further to them. So she asked him what they were, whence they came, and whither they were bound, and he told her. Then she counselled him, that when he arose in the morning he should beat them without mercy.

So when he arose, he getteth him a grievous crabtree cudgel, and goes down into the dungeon to them, and there first falls to rating them as if they were dogs, although they never gave him a word of distaste. Then he falls upon them and beats them fearfully, in such sort that they were not able to help themselves, or to turn them upon the floor. This done, he withdraws and leaves them there to condole their misery, and to mourn under their distress: so all that day they spent their time in nothing but sighs and bitter lamentations. The next night Diffidence, talking with her husband further about them, and understanding that they were yet alive, did advise him to counsel them to make away with themselves. When morning was come, he goes to them in a surly manner, as before, and perceiving them to be very sore with the stripes that he had given them the day before, he told them, that since they were never like to come out of that place, their only way would be forthwith to make an end of themselves, either with knife, halter, or poison: for why, said he, should you choose to live, seeing it is attended with so much bitterness?

At first they would have followed his counsel; but when he was gone away Hopeful said, Let us consider, the Lord of the country to which we are going hath said, "Thou shalt do no murder," thus we are forbidden to take the giant's counsel to kill ourselves.

On Saturday, about midnight, they began to pray, and continued in prayer till almost break of day. Then Christian, as one half amazed, brake out into passionate speech: What a fool, quoth he, am I to lie in this dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle. Then said Hopeful, That's good news, good brother, pluck it out of thy bosom, and try. Then Christian pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the dungeon door, whose bolt, as he turned the key, gave back, and the door flew open with ease, and Christian and Hopeful both came out. Then they went on, and came to the King's highway again, and so were safe, because they were out of the Giant's jurisdiction.

Now when they were gone over the stile, they began to contrive what they should do at that place to prevent other pilgrims from falling into the hands of Giant Despair. So they erected there a pillar, and upon the side of it engraved this sentence: "Over this stile lies Doubting Castle, kept by Giant Despair, who despiseth the King of the Celestial Country, and seeks to destroy His holy pilgrims." Many therefore read what was here written, and escaped the danger.

They then went forward till they came to the Delectable Mountains, up which they climbed that they might behold the gardens and orchards, the vineyards and fountains of water; where also they drank and washed themselves, and did freely eat of the vineyards. Now there were on the tops of these mountains, Shepherds feeding their flocks, and they stood by the highway-side. The pilgrims, therefore, went to them, and they asked, Whose Delectable Mountains are these, and whose be the sheep that feed upon them?

These mountains are Immanuel's land, and they are within sight of His city; and the sheep also are His, said a Shepherd.

Then the Shepherds, whose names were Knowledge, Experience and Sincere, led them to their tents and made them partake of what was ready. And they stayed there awhile and solaced themselves with the good of those Delectable Mountains.

THE FALSENESS OF FLATTERER

They then went on till they came at a place where they saw a way put itself into their way, and seemed withal to lie as straight as the way which they should go; and here they knew not which of the two to take, for both seemed straight before them; therefore here they stood still to consider. And as they were thinking about the way, behold a man black of flesh, but covered with a very light robe, came to them, and asked them why they stood there. They answered, they were going to the Celestial City, but knew not which of these ways to take. Follow me, said the man; it is thither that I am going. So they followed him in the way that but now came into the road, which by degrees turned, and turned them so from the city that they desired to go to, that in a little time their faces were turned away from it, yet they followed him. But by-and-by, before they were aware, he led them both within the compass of a net, in which they were both so entangled that they knew not what to do; and with that the white robe fell off the black man's back. Then they saw where they were. Wherefore there they lay crying some time, for they could not get themselves out.

Then said Christian to his fellow, Now do I see myself in an error. Did not the Shepherds

bid us beware of the Flatterer? As is the saying of the wise man, so we have found it this day: "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet."

Thus they lay bewailing themselves in the net. At last they espied a Shining One coming towards them with a whip of small cords in his hand. So he rent the net and let the men out. Then said he to them, Follow me, that I may set you in your way again. So he led them back to the way which they had left to follow the Flatterer. He asked, moreover, if the Shepherds did not bid them beware of the Flatterer? They answered, Yes; but we did not imagine that this fine-spoken man had been he.

Then I saw in my dream, that he commanded them to lie down; which, when they did, he chastised them sore, to teach them the good way wherein they should walk; and as he chastised them, he said, As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent. This done, he bid them go on their way. So they thanked him for all his kindness, and went softly along the right way singing.

Now I saw in my dream, that by this time the pilgrims were entering into the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant. Here they were within sight of the City they were going to: also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof; for in this land the Shining Ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of Heaven.

THE RIVER AND THE CITY

Now, as they walked in this land, they had more rejoicing than in parts more remote from the kingdom to which they were bound; and drawing near to the City, they had yet a more perfect view thereof. It was builded of pearls and precious stones, also the streets thereof were paved with gold.

So I saw, that as they went on, there met them two men, in raiment that shone like gold, also their faces shone as the light.

These men asked the pilgrims whence they came; and they told them.

Now I further saw, that betwixt them and the gate was a river; but there was no bridge to go over; and the river was very deep. At the sight, therefore, of this river the pilgrims were much stunned; but the men that went with them said, You must go through, or you cannot come at the gate.

They then addressed themselves to the water, and, entering, Christian began to sink, and, crying out to his good friend Hopeful, he said, I sink in the deep waters; the billows go over my head; all his waves go over me.

Then said the other, Be of good cheer, my brother: I feel the bottom, and it is good. But presently they both took courage, and began to find ground to stand upon, and so it followed that the rest of the river was but shallow. Thus they got over.

Now upon the bank of the river, on the other side, they saw the two shining men again, who there waited for them.

Now you must note, that the City stood upon a mighty hill; but the pilgrims went up that hill with ease, because they had these two men to lead them up by the arms: they had likewise left their mortal garments behind them in the river; for though they went in with them, they came out without them. They therefore went up here with much agility and speed.

They were now on their way to the Paradise of God, wherein is the tree of life. There, said the men, you shall meet again the friends that are gone thither before you, and shall with joy receive every one that shall follow after you.

Now while they were thus drawing towards the gate, behold, a company of the heavenly host came out to meet them, to whom it was said by the other two Shining Ones, These are the men that have loved our Lord, when they were in the world, and that have left all for His holy name; and He hath sent us to fetch them, and we have brought them thus far on their desired journey.

Now when they were come up to the gate, there was written over it in letters of gold, "BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, THAT THEY MAY HAVE RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND MAY ENTER IN THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY."

The King then commanded to open the gate, "That the righteous nation (said He) that keepeth truth may enter in."

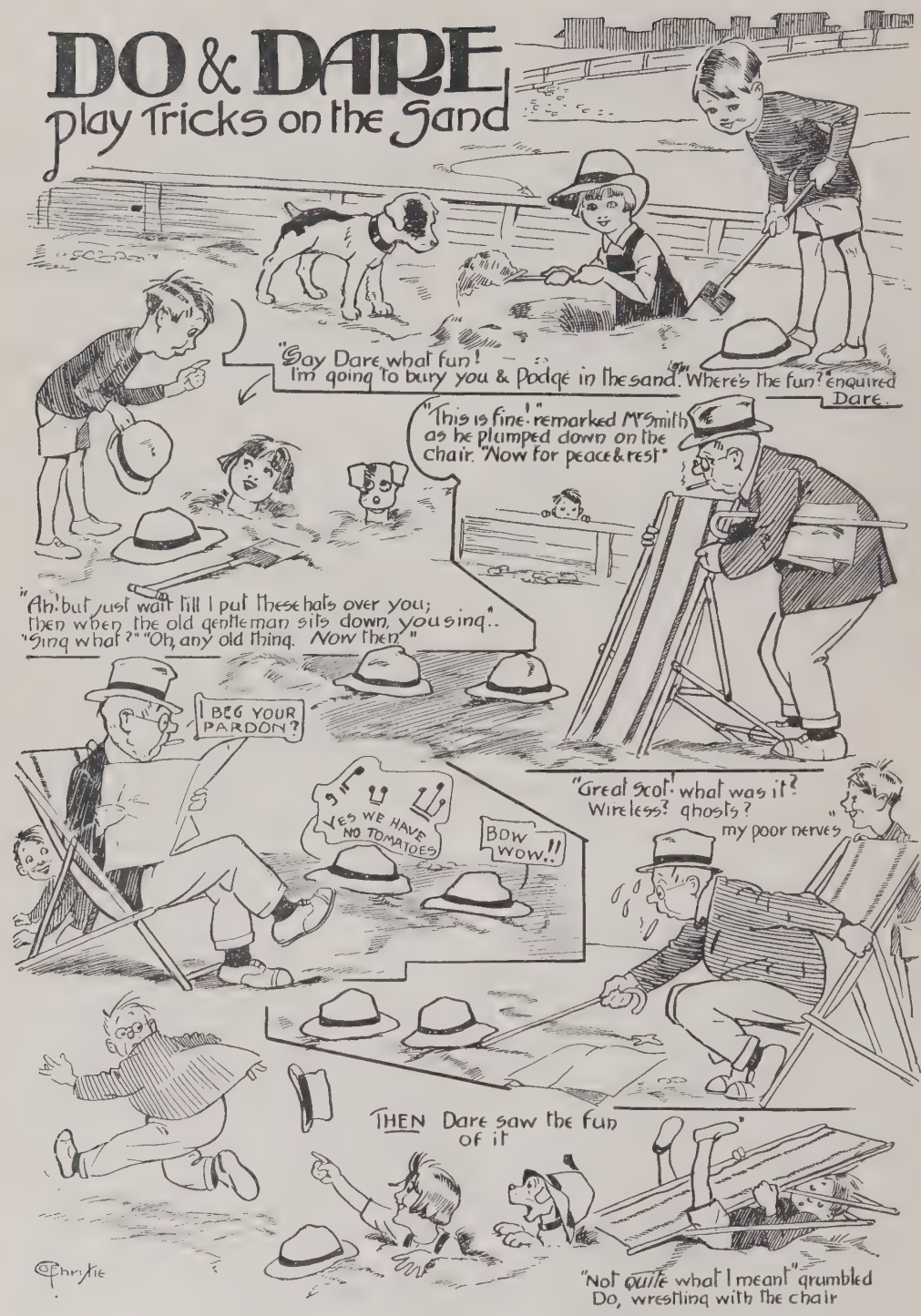
I heard in my dream, that all the bells in the City rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them, "Enter ye into the joy of our Lord."

Then I awoke, and behold it was a dream.

[There is no space in this short version for many of Christian's adventures. If you get the complete book, you can read all of them, and also the splendid Part II, which tells what happened to Christian's wife and children when they followed him to the Shining City.]

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

The next "Novel in a Nutshell" will be "Gulliver's Travels," by Jonathan Swift. Please write and tell me if you would like this feature to be continued in the next volume. Address, The Editor, LITTLE FOLKS, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.4


DO & DARE
play Tricks on the Sand
"Say Dare what fun! I'm going to bury you & Podge in the sand."
"Where's the fun?" enquired Dare.
"This is fine!" remarked Mr Smith as he plumped down on the chair. "Now for peace & rest"
"Ah! but just wait till I put these hats over you; then when the old gentleman sits down, you sing.." "Sing what?" "Oh, any old thing. Now then."
I BEG YOUR PARDON?
YES WE HAVE NO TOMATOES
BOW WOW!!
"Great Scot! what was it? Wireless? ghosts? my poor nerves"
THEN Dare saw the fun of it
©Christie
"Not quite what I meant" grumbled Do, wrestling with the chair

The Thirteenth Sampler

By Ethel Talbot

"OH, Miss Lee, mayn't I?" begged Zillah.

"Most certainly *not*," said Miss Lee. "We shall miss the train."

They missed it, anyway. The match at Dean School had taken too long; or the Dean School clocks had been wrong; or something or other. The team from Greyfriars found itself with a good solid half-hour to wait for the next train.

"Then, oh, Miss Lee, mayn't I?" recommenced Zillah with emphasis. "It's my one and only chance. And it seemed almost like a miracle. We passed it on the way down. And it's absolutely certain to be cheap, I should think. And mother collects them. And it's her birthday next week; and I've been pommelling my brains all term to think of the right thing. And that's just *it!*"

Miss Lee deliberated.

"Well—if you and Muriel both go. I don't see why you shouldn't. Come straight back and don't wait."

Muriel and Zillah turned and scooted.

"Where did you see it?" panted Muriel, as they ran.

"In that little shop. Hanging in the window. Might absolutely easily have passed it. It's a 1776, I believe. I dare say we'll get it for five shillings or less," panted Zillah.

She had time to recover from her panting fit, however, after she had lifted the handle of the little shop door, and had stepped towards the coveted object. There it hung, facing the window; a dingy, shabby sampler in a broken old frame. She had been right, too, as regards the price. Five shillings was marked in white chalk in very large figures on its back.

"It isn't a 1776," remarked Zillah critically, with the voice of a connoisseur; "it's 1876, after all; but mother will love it. This will make the thirteenth sampler in her collection."

"Thirteen's an unlucky number," remarked her chum. "I suppose that's why

we'll be jolly certain to miss the train over it, since the owner doesn't seem inclined to hurry from his or her tea to serve us."

They both stamped loudly on the floor.

No one took any notice of their stamping, however. So they proceeded to call. "I say, anyone there?"

Nobody evidently was. The place felt slightly grucy. Old furnishings can seem, somehow, to be endued with life. Broken chairs assume a sinister look in the half-light. Likewise the time was going, and going fast. "We'll *have* to go," remarked Muriel.

"Not without this," said Zillah-of-one-idea. She felt in her pocket. Out came five shillings, and down from its nail came the old framed sampler. "That's the way one does business on paper-stalls, often; so, why not here?" inquired she.

Muriel had nothing to say against it. Her only wish was to catch the train.

They caught it.

"It *is* a beauty, but not so very old," remarked Zillah, displaying her purchase. "It's 1876, instead of 1776. Well, judging by mother's others, I don't somehow think that this is worth more than the five shillings. However, it *is* a sampler of sorts, even if ——"

"Even if it's the thirteenth," put in Muriel grimly, for someone or other had hit her ankle a pretty severe whack as she had entered the carriage, and she was not feeling as serene as usual.

"Pooh!" Zillah was not superstitious in the least. The thirteenth sampler went schoolwards with them; it went dormitorywards at night. Then it was forgotten, tucked away in Zillah's drawer as it was until next day.

The words of the Head reminded them of it—just after prayers next morning. Everyone could tell by her intonation that day that something was brewing for someone among the lines. Each girl looked back upon her recent deeds and felt secure. Secure as any other felt each of the pair who were shortly to be called out from the ranks.

"Zillah Grey and Muriel Bury, will you wait behind, if you please, when the rest of the school leave the hall."

Neither of them thought of the sampler, but it was of the sampler that Miss Dean reminded them without much delay.

"Is it correct—I can hardly credit the information that I have received—that two of the Greyfriars girls went into a small shop in Tidchester yesterday and—without waiting for the attention of the salesman—disappeared carrying an antique sampler of—great value?" The Head, now in her room, seated at her desk, while the culprits stood before her, adjusted her tortoiseshell-rimmed glasses, and lifted a letter from the rack. "Miss Lee informs me that she gave permission to you two to make a purchase, but—this letter received by me this morning tells a very different tale."

"Miss Dean——" chorused the pair.

The tale proceeded after that in more orderly fashion, Zillah leading off, and Muriel occasionally joining in.

"Truly, Miss Dean, it was the only thing to do; and five shillings was marked on the back in chalk; it's there still. Besides which," this from Zillah, "it's not *worth* more. I know a good bit about samplers, now, because it's mother's hobby—collecting them, I mean."

"And we left the five shillings—two half-crowns—in the very middle of the counter."

Miss Dean listened. Then she sent for the sampler, which was accordingly brought without delay. Having agreed that five shillings seemed certainly a suitable sum, and quite a sufficient one to have paid for it, she took up her pen.

"I understand. Well, under the circumstances, I think I agree that you have not acted exactly wrongly, though certainly a little hastily. If you had sent word last night to the shop and had explained the matter, any unnecessary trouble would not have been caused. However, I myself will write and explain. The owner of the shop—who apparently was in the back of the shop at the time—heard you come in, and heard you go out, and seems to have carried away the idea—which was natural under the circumstances—that the sampler was not paid for. However, since he owns that he *was* in the shop that afternoon, I think this disproves your suspicion that someone else entered after you had left and took the five shillings. Apparently your hat-bands and the fact of your carrying the sampler were noticed in the street, and the shopkeeper was acquainted with the fact that you were both Greyfriars girls. A happening which is unlucky, certainly; but I do not think you are altogether to blame; I will write and explain the facts of the case to the shopkeeper. The sampler is bought and paid for, evidently, and that is the main thing."

Meanwhile the subject was not to lie as

"It was more than a shock suddenly to feel a tap on her arm" (p. 353)

Drawn by Jack M. Faulks

dormant as was hoped. That particular day passed without any undue happenings, but the next day certainly did not. Zillah and Muriel, playing an easy game of tennis during the heat of the afternoon, found themselves suddenly called from the opposite end of the courts.

A junior, gesticulating, and evidently on the *qui vive* about something or other, raised an imperative shout. "You're—wanted——"

They were "wanted" apparently, to their huge amazement, by a rather fashionably-dressed stranger who was just then walking down the steps which led from the Head's private door. Feeling hot and untidy and wholly amazed, the pair advanced.

"Delighted to see you, my dears—as I hoped——"

There was no remark possible but an incredulous stare. "Is it *us* you wish to see?" inquired Zillah. She almost added that it was not visitors' day. She almost, as a matter of fact, turned and left the visitor. Patchouli scent has an unpleasant odour; too much powder on the cheeks is an unpleasant sight. This visitor was as unlike any other visitor that they remembered at Greyfriars as could be.

"I've been to your lady-Head, my dears, and she says——"

"Oh, then ——" Zillah and Muriel fell into line.

"I've come about that there—sampler!"

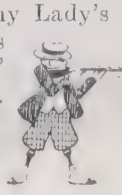
So that was it. The saleswoman, of course. They both broke in. "Oh, we see. We're so sorry. Oh, of course, Miss Dean has explained to you. You see, we *did* leave the five shillings."

"Five shillings is nothing to me," remarked the visitor. "Oh dear me, no. I come from where five shillingses grow like currants. From the Lady Bettiny's, in fact. I'm Lady Bettiny's maid. Didn't you know that it was *her* sampler that you took?"

"*Hers!*" Here was a different complication, indeed!

Lady Bettiny was known by name to the whole of Greyfriars. Hers was a name to conjure with in the district, as everyone knew. At this strange change of affairs, the pair stood and stared.

"Yes, my dears, and I'm to have it back, if *you* please—my Lady's a-missing of it. She sends you this five shillings." Out came the sum.



Zillah and Muriel felt suddenly—queer.

This was an un-schooly way of doing the business, somehow. Surely Miss Dean would not have sent a stranger out to them like this. And—this individual did *not* look like a lady's maid.

Zillah waited. Upstairs in her dormitory lay the parcel, certainly; but she rather decided that it should stay there.

"Won't—Lady Bettiny come herself, or—write about it?" suggested Zillah. It somehow only confirmed their suspicions when the woman grew a little annoyed.

"What's that? Likely, isn't it? You go and fetch it, my girl!"

"I'll tell you what we *will* do," Muriel spoke up. "We'll go straight to Miss Dean, if you'll wait for a moment. *She* arranges things like that. You say you've seen her, and so——" They turned on their heels. "If you would come, too," said they politely.

The stranger didn't come, however. Suddenly, she just—went. She was not in sight when they reached the front door. A speedy visit to the topmost window of Greyfriars Tower, where the best view could be obtained, showed her literally scooting down the hill.

"Now *what's* wrong?" inquired Zillah.

"Number thirteen, I rather think," returned her chum.

They told Miss Dean, however, and that lady literally stared. "My dear children, are you dreaming? I have had no visitor this afternoon, whatever."

The Head touched her bell.

The parlourmaid, coming in reply to the summons, agreed that there certainly had been no visitor for the Head.

"No, madam, and no cards left. There was just one caller, if she could be called that, this afternoon. A soft-spoken body who asked if this was Lutterworth Hall, and then begged my pardon and went away."

"And then—why *then*, she must have hailed one of the juniors——" Zillah burst out as soon as the maid left the room, "and asked to see us, and said——"

It was a very queer state of affairs. The Head, however, seemed to think comparatively little of it. "She *may* have been the shopwoman, of course."

"But, Miss Dean, she *said*——"

The post arrived at that moment, and the girls stood by while Miss Dean sorted the letters and retained her own. "Tidchester postmark," said Miss Dean. "I think —" She read through a longish screed.

Evidently an annoying screed; the girls felt thankful for the sake of the salesman that he had not been nearer than Tidchester was to Miss Dean's august presence when they saw the flash in her eye.

"Dear me, this is quite—preposterous! A sale's surely a *sale!* No, girls, that cannot have been the saleswoman of the shop in question. The owner writes, himself. He mentions that he has been offered five pounds for the sampler, and asks me to return it. He actually encloses a five shilling postal order. He——" Miss Dean's brow looked decidedly thunderous. "I shall most certainly ring Lady Bettiny up, and inform her of what you have told me. Meanwhile——" The girls were dismissed.

"I literally loathe that sampler," muttered Zillah.

"Of all numbers," quoth Muriel, "I loathe the number thirteen."

"And *I* literally loathe and hate it, too," agreed Zillah; "and what's more, I'm growing afraid of it. I know what I'm going to do, too; I'm going to send it home to dad. A sale's a *sale:* Miss Dean said so; and unless the sampler *is* Lady Bettiny's, which I'm jolly positive that it *isn't*, well, I've every right to it, and that's flat. I'll send it to dad to-morrow, and he can look after the magic. By registered post I'll send it, and——"

She did, too. At least, she began to, after an interview with the Head, who informed them both that though an ancient sampler certainly *had* been amongst a number of old lumber articles recently sent down from Lady Bettiny's country house, yet that she had certainly no desire to obtain possession of any of the articles again! "Lady Bettiny herself spoke to me through the telephone," remarked Miss Dean, "and I think we may take those words of hers as absolutely final. She is in trouble, so she told me, or she would have said more. However, to-night I shall write to the little shop and tell the salesman that Lady Bettiny and I are in communication. His postal order shall be returned to him. You are perfectly at liberty, Zillah, to send the parcel home."

Zillah, as mentioned before, determined to lay the powers of thirteen upon her father's broad shoulders straight away.

"Post office walk? Oh, certainly, you and Muriel may go," remarked the mistress-in-charge next day.

"Will you register this, please?" requested Zillah twenty minutes later, laying her parcel upon the scales of the little post office in the village below.

Threepence extra would be the charge for registration, but the sampler was now lying heavily upon her nerves; and the threepence would be well spent, so she considered. It was a bit of a shock to notice that the registration number on the slip that the post office clerk commenced to write upon happened to be thirteen, too; and it was more than a shock suddenly to feel a tap on her arm as she prepared to hand over the cash.

"If there is a sampler, framed in an old frame, and bearing the date 1876 inside that parcel," said a business-like voice, "I must ask you to hand it over to me."

Zillah almost screamed as her horrified gaze was met by the cool, business-like look of a lady who had been standing beside the counter, obviously buying stamps, but in reality reading the inscription on the parcel addressed to Major Grey.

"You, yourself, I believe are Miss Grey? This parcel, I gather from the inscription, is addressed to one of your family——" By this time, by some magic or other, Zillah, Muriel and the business-like lady, together with the only partially registered parcel, were out in the road.

"And now, cheer up," said the business-like lady, "and I'll tell you all about it."

She did, too. Straight away and without delay. "We'll bring it back to your school," said the business-like lady. "As a matter of fact, until we've opened it, I can't be really sure; but I very nearly am. You two are the girls who carried it away from Todd's shop at Tidchester?"

They admitted they were.

"It *is* Lady Bettiny's," said the lady. "That seems certain, since your Head rang her up last night. And it was entirely on account of the said ringing-up that we have got on what I think is a very distinct clue. Please describe the woman who came to ask you for the sampler yesterday."

They did.

The lady smiled. "The same. Poor Todd described her, too. Poor man, he *has* been bothered. He is lame, you know; and couldn't get to serve you in time. Heard you go out, and only heard afterwards from the neighbours what you were carrying when you went. Didn't find the five shillings till after. Well, anyway, he's a protégé of old Lady Bettiny's, you know, and she often sends him down lumber to sell with his stock. You didn't know that it was so valuable, did you, as we suspect."

"But——"

"Not in itself; but—we rather think that Lady Bettiny's string of pearls is hidden behind the frame! Oh, don't gasp. We're almost sure. You see, the fact of the matter was that she missed them the very day that she sent down all that lumber to Todd's. There were paper-hangers in the house that day, and one of them was an odd-man engaged for the job. That we've found out. We are almost sure, also, that he knew something of the loss of the pearls; they disappeared just after he had been in the room where the pearls were. No, don't misunderstand me: he didn't carry them off; no crack burglar has such obvious tactics; his idea was, of course, to hide them somewhere for a while, till the hue and cry wore off—the paper-hangers were to be on the job for a month or more!

"Well, what he didn't guess was that next day a whole lot of Lady Bettiny's so-called "litter" was going down to Todd's, and the sampler with it."

"And you think he hid the pearls *there?*"

"I'm almost sure," said the lady, "because of certain things. An accomplice, calling herself—to you—Lady Bettiny's maid; and calling herself—to Todd—a lover of antiques—but, apparently, with an eye for nothing but samplers; also who looked the part of neither; has made herself much in evidence. When your Head rang up Lady Bettiny last night, the old lady did not think of putting two and two together, but I—as a detective called in——"

School was reached.

Within half an hour Lady Bettiny's string of priceless pearls was lying in the palm of the lady-detective's hand, while the frame of the old sampler lay on the table.

* * *

"And so, mummy, many happy returns, but no present yet, though I've got five shillings. I'll tell you all the tale soon, but meanwhile—oh, *don't* add a thirteenth sampler to your collection. I *loathe* thirteen——"

"And so, Zillah, don't bother about being superstitious over my samplers. I've got sixteen, darling, and the thirteenth is the nicest of all. Longing for your tale and for your present, but most of all for holidays, when I get you——"

(The above are extracts from two letters recently despatched).

The Stoat changes his coat to a pure white in the winter, so that he becomes invisible in the snow

Photo: Miss Frances Pitt

Little Folks Nature Club

Preparing for Winter

Conducted By "Squirrel"

IN autumn all wild things prepare for winter as we do ourselves. If you watch the squirrel this month you will see that he is very often on the ground, especially under beech trees or oaks or hazels. He is hunting for nuts and acorns, partly for his present needs, but more to put part in some larder either in his winter nest or near it, so that he may have plenty of food at hand to carry him safely through the long dark months.

Laying up his Winter Store

If you watch him for a time you will probably see him go off carrying a nut in his mouth, and may even be able to follow his movements from branch to branch and from tree to tree till he reaches the hole in which he is laying up his store. But very often he just scrapes a little hole in the ground, pops his nut into it, and then covers it up.

He will always be able to find such hidden treasures if he wants them, but probably he will have plenty in his main store to serve his purpose, so he may never need to look for them. In that case they will germinate next spring and may some day grow up into fine trees. So the squirrel renders the trees a good service in return for the nuts he carries away, by planting some of their seeds for them.

But you will also notice that the squirrel prepares for winter in another way. During the summer his body was covered with a red coat, but his tail was scraggy and almost white. In August the white hair of the tail moulted and was replaced by a new thick covering of greyish-brown hair, and since then the red fur of the body has also been changed to brown. Owing to the thickness of this new coat he looks much fatter than before, and his tail seems stout and heavy. But his fur must be thick to keep him warm on cold winter nights, and it is important that his tail should be well clothed at this season, because he wraps it over his head when he sleeps.

The Stoat's Change of Colour

The stoat also changes the colour of his coat for winter, but this happens chiefly in northern and mountainous country. There his whole fur becomes pure white, except the tip of his tail, which is always black. When he is in this coat he is known as the ermine.

In the south of England the colour hardly changes at all, and even then becomes white only in patches. The white coat is very useful to him in winter where the snow lasts a long time, for it makes him invisible to his enemies and to his prey.

Neither the squirrel nor the stoat hibernates. The stoat has to keep on hunting in order to live. The squirrel sleeps longer than usual, but he may be seen abroad on almost any day in the year.

The Dormouse Hibernates

The dormouse, on the other hand, does hibernate. He lays up a store of nuts like the squirrel, but he never puts it in his nest. It is usually hidden some little distance off, and is intended to ensure him a supply of food when he wakes up in early spring.

His winter nest is built of grass and is so small and closely woven, and he tucks himself into it so tightly and snugly, that there is no room in it for anything but himself. When he has woven himself into it, he turns down his head, turns his tail up over it, and sleeps soundly till February or March. So soundly does he sleep that if you break into his nest he will not show any sign of life.

Field Mice and Rats

Field mice make winter nests, but they do not hibernate. Rats, which have played the tyrant in the hedgerows all summer, leave their quarters there at the coming of autumn and flock into the rickyards and take possession of the corn stacks, where they find comfort and plenty for the winter, unless the farmer discovers them.

Frogs, toads, newts and snakes all hibernate. They hide themselves in holes in the ground, sometimes alone and sometimes in companies. Frogs frequently bury themselves in the mud at the bottom of their pond and sleep there till they are aroused by the first call of spring, which may be in February, but is more often in March.

Hang themselves up till Spring

Bats also hibernate, but they make no special preparations for winter. In summer they flit about at night, and in the morning they hang themselves up head downwards in some hollow tree or cave or ruin, and sleep till dusk. Then one autumn morning they hang themselves up as usual, feeling more sluggish than ever, and sleep on till spring calls them.

Once upon a time it was thought that birds hibernated, too. People could not understand what happened to the swallows, how they disappeared in autumn as if by a miracle and reappeared again in spring. So it was thought that they must bury themselves in the mud at the bottom of the ponds like the frogs.

Snakes hide themselves in holes in the ground during the winter period

Photo: Mrs. M. H. Crawford

But now we know that they do not hibernate, but fly away south for thousands of miles and spend the winter in the warm African climate. Then when spring calls they fly northward again and arrive in their summer haunts on almost the same date every year. And this they accomplish though they have no time-tables to help them or sign-posts to guide them.

Birds that Remain Here

Nearly all our insect-eating birds migrate in the same way. After the nesting season is over they gather in flocks and make their way southward. But a few species remain with us; for example, the tits, the tree-creeper, the goldcrest, the woodpeckers, and the nuthatch.

The tits spend the winter in flocks, and usually these flocks consist of more than one species. Indeed, in many flocks you may see four species of tit, and also some goldcrests, one or two tree-creepers, and possibly a nuthatch

All these birds feed on insects, so where one can pick up a meal the others may also. That is one reason for keeping together in winter: they help each other to find food. Another is that when there are many they are less likely to be attacked than when there are few.

Now all birds prepare for winter in another way. They moult their old feathers in August and September and grow a complete new coat of them. Some species just have the same plumage as they had before, but others, like the squirrel, have a special coat for winter. The common sparrow never has bright colours, but his winter feathers are duller than those he wore in spring and summer.

During autumn the Squirrel hunts for nuts and acorns which he puts by for the winter

Photo: Mrs. M. H. Crawford

Less Conspicuous in Winter

This is most evident on his bib, which is jet black in spring but is speckled with white in winter. Think of what the starling was in summer, with his glossy black plumage shot with purple and green, and then look at him in his winter plumage. His feathers are still black shot with green and purple, but they are tipped with buff and white, and so he is very much speckled and not nearly so bright and conspicuous as he was before. As winter advances and gives place to spring those buff and white tips are gradually worn away by the action of wind and weather, till at last, about nesting time, the bird appears in his full splendour.

Much the same thing happens to the linnet. In summer he has a beautiful rosy breast, but now it is plain dull brown. If, however, you could separate some of the feathers and look at their under parts, you would find that they are rosy red except for the tips. As the brown tips wear away the red gradually appears, and it is at its very best in June and July.

The little pied wagtail has a black gorget in summer covering his chin, throat and upper part of his breast. But look at him now and you will see that his chin and throat are white, and there is a black crescent on his breast.

The lapwing, which belongs to quite a different family, makes a similar change on his chin and throat, which are white in winter with a black crescent on the breast, but become black in spring.

The black-headed gull has come back to estuaries and rivers again and to ponds in city parks, after an absence of six months. When he left last March his head and throat were covered with a chocolate hood, but now this has disappeared and has been replaced by white, except for two little brown spots on each side of the head, one before and the other behind the eye.

The Fieldmouse makes a winter nest, but does not hibernate

Photo: Mrs. M. H. Crawford

Insects Hibernate

Insects hibernate in various ways. Many of them lay eggs and then die, and the eggs hatch next spring, when there is plenty of fresh food for the young larvæ. Some species hatch towards the end of the summer, and when the larvæ are partly grown they go into hiding and sleep till spring calls them forth again to go on with their feeding.

Others are full-fed at the beginning of autumn, so they change into pupæ and spend the winter in that state. And a few butterflies hibernate in their full adult form.

In September and October you may often find butterflies in corners of outhouses and greenhouses and under eaves.

If you care to watch them you will notice that they will remain in the same spot until some mild day in January or February wakes them up and they go forth to look for flowers which are not yet in blossom. Those you will see most commonly are the tortoiseshell, the peacock, the brimstone and the comma. You may also sometimes find the painted lady and the red admiral.

Plants Prepare for Winter

Plants, of course, prepare for the winter. Trees shed their leaves, but they also make new ones ready and fold them up in resting buds securely covered with hard, warm scales.

Many plants wither and die but leave behind them seeds to carry on the work of the race next year. Of course, all plants produce seed for this purpose, and most of them scatter it now, but some keep it cosily hidden till spring. The pine cones, for example, do not open to release their seeds till they are touched by the breath of a mild spring day, and the little seed balls of the plane tree remain tightly shut till May.

But what are we to think of a plant that defies this great law that all wild things must prepare for the coming winter? The ivy has waited till now to open its flowers, and its honey is being sucked every night by scores of moths. It cares so little for the terrors of winter that it actually sets its seeds from now until December, and forms and develops its berries during the long dark winter months and ripens them in April, when food is scarce and birds are hungry.

La Belle Sauvage

Library Club Pages
By
Violet M. Methley

IF you have ever written to the Editor of LITTLE FOLKS—and I know that many of you have—you will have noticed the curious address—La Belle Sauvage.

I expect that you know enough French to have translated it for yourselves as "The Beautiful Savage," and I dare say that you have wondered why the home of LITTLE FOLKS should have such a queer name as this.

Well, wondering is the first step towards learning anything, and this article is to answer that "wonder" of yours.

The name "La Belle Sauvage" is much more than just an address, like the "Ivanhoes" and "Killarneys" which we see written up over the doors of houses everywhere.

Hundreds of Years Old

We shall find "La Belle Sauvage" mentioned again and again in history during the past five hundred years, and it is a place where strange and exciting things have happened all through those centuries.

Learned men have argued as to what the name really means, but, at any rate, we know this, that it was the sign of a very famous inn or tavern for many hundreds of years, although, during that time the actual name was changed several times.

When we hear of the inn first, in 1380, in the reign of Richard II, it seems to have been called Savage's Inn because it was owned by a man called Will Savage.

In 1453, during the Wars of the Roses, we find that it was still called Savage's Inn, but the sign was The Bell in the Hoop.

Then we jump over another hundred years to 1568, and find in the records of the Cutlers' Company of London that a certain John Craythorne gave this company the house of the Belle Sauvage, and in 1584 the Inn is actually called Ye Belle Sauvage. So that this name was certainly used as far back as the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Moreover, at this time, from 1648 to 1672, a writer called Noble tells us that the landlord's "tokens" of this inn—little metal discs, which were used by different innkeepers instead of money—had the image stamped upon them of an Indian woman holding a bow. And it is a picture just like this, in a small circle, which is still used on the writing-paper of Messrs. Cassell, who, as you all know, publish LITTLE FOLKS, and have their works and offices in the old "Belle Sauvage" yard.

But if this was the sign of the inn in the time of Charles II, it seems to have been changed a little later, for we find that in the reign of Queen Anne the sign of the Belle Sauvage was a savage *man*, standing by a bell—a Bell and a Savage, you see, but with quite a different meaning!

Yet a writer in the *Spectator* just at this time says that the name of the inn, La Belle Sauvage, meant, as we take it now, "the beautiful savage."

It all seems a little bit muddling at first, but was most likely simple enough at the time, if one tries to think how things come about.

A Likely Solution

Probably—so people have thought—in the very early days a man called Savage kept the inn, and very likely his wife or daughter was called Bell or Isabel—so that it came to be known as Bell Savage's Inn.

Or, since the earliest sign of which we read was a Bell in a Hoop, it may well have been called the Bell—Savage's Inn.

This would quite explain the later sign of a Bell with a Savage standing beside it—a kind of pun on the two names—and it would also explain how it became La Belle Sauvage, the Beautiful Savage.

You see, the *sound* is just the same, and at this time, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was an old French romance very well known in England called the story of La Belle Sauvage.

It is very likely indeed that one of the landlords of the famous inn, who knew this romance, thought that here was a much prettier sign than the Savage with the Bell, and one which also made a pun on the old name of the tavern, so that he decided to use the picture of the Beautiful Savage—the Indian girl, holding a bow and dressed in skins.

Up to this, we have thought only of the

name—the sign; now we will go back and try to see the inn itself, as it was in those ancient days. We will look on at some of those things which happened in La Belle Sauvage yard, before our own LITTLE FOLKS came to live there.

Where the Old Inn Stood

Those of you who live in London, or come there on a visit, can see the place where the old inn stood, as it now is. Take an omnibus to Ludgate Circus and walk on a few yards from where it stops, along the pavement towards St. Paul's Cathedral, standing at the top of Ludgate Hill.

Then, on your left, you will see a high entrance, and over it is written in big letters "La Belle Sauvage."

If you go through, you will find yourself in a kind of stone-paved square, with large buildings all round. The noise of printing machines, big lorries loaded with rolls of paper and bales of books make it a busy place, and this is now the home of LITTLE FOLKS and many other magazines and papers.

Walking to the end of the square, you will see a new entrance hall, over which is the sign of the "beautiful savage"—and that is where you go to call on the Editor. So now you know!

But we must not linger in the Belle Sauvage Yard of to-day. I want to take you on a long journey, back across the centuries, back to the time when Savage's Inn stood on Ludgate Hill, under the shadow of Old St. Paul's, that most wonderful cathedral, which perished in the Great Fire of London.

Inns for the Wayfarers

It is difficult for us to realize the hugeness of Old St. Paul's, with its spire which was the highest the world has ever seen. From all over England and Europe people came to visit the cathedral and its shrines, and it was to provide for these wayfarers that so many inns were built close by. Of these inns, Savage's was one of the most famous.

The outer gateway stood just where the entrance of La Belle Sauvage is now, and, when you passed through, you found inside the outer courtyard, just at it is to-day.

This outer court, where the publishing offices are now, was surrounded by houses in the old days, timbered houses with projecting eaves, like heavy eyebrows.

Another archway led to the inner courtyard, and over this, on chains, hung the inn sign, painted on a large board, whilst the inn itself surrounded the second courtyard. All the rooms opened on to wooden galleries, or balconies, which ran round the square, and these galleries served a great many purposes.

One use was exactly that of a theatre gallery nowadays, a place from which an audience could watch plays.

This may seem strange, but in old times these inn yards were often used for the performance of plays, and we read in several histories that the courtyard of La Belle Sauvage was a particularly favourite place.

How it was Managed

You must remember that the first plays of all, in the old pilgrimage times, were what are called "Mysteries" or "Moralities"; that is, plays which were also meant to teach lessons and to be a kind of religious service. They were founded on old legends, and the characters were saints, angels, devils, and so on. Some of you may know the play called *Everyman*. Well, this is really one of the old "mysteries," such as were performed in La Belle Sauvage yard on a movable platform, or on planks laid across the top of a cart to make a stage.

There was no scenery, and when they had finished their parts, the actors stepped down and stood amongst the audience, who crowded round on all sides, or watched from the inn galleries. When the play was over, the cart would move on to another inn yard, and there begin all over again.

Later on, other plays were performed on these movable stages — comedies and tragedies, and there were more entertainments besides.

In the reign of Elizabeth a very famous showman, called Banks, stayed for some time at La Belle Sauvage, and here, in the courtyard, he used to exhibit his wonderful horse "Marocco," keeping it in the stables of the inn.

Climbed to the Top of St. Paul's

"Marocco" was a very clever beast, who had been taught many tricks, and his master valued him so much that he had him shod with silver, and fed him from a silver pail.

On one occasion this horse climbed

the hundreds and hundreds of steps to the top of the spire of Old St. Paul's, and I have already told you how very high *that* was.

Both "Marocco" and his master came to a most tragic end. Banks took his wonderful horse to perform at Rome, and the superstitious priests thought that such cleverness in an animal could only be witchcraft. And so they ordered the poor horse and his master to be burnt alive in a public square at Rome.

In the time of Elizabeth there was a School of Defence, or Fencing School, established in the Belle Sauvage yard, but not long before this the old inn had seen real and terrible fighting close at hand.

A Battle on the Hill

We read in the pages of an old historian of this great battle in London, up the Strand and Fleet Street to Ludgate Hill.

It was in the year 1554, at the time of Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion in favour of the poor girl-queen, Lady Jane Grey. Wyatt, who was only twenty-three, and very handsome and brave, had led his band of followers from Rochester to London.

He fought his way up to Ludgate Hill, but here the City troops resisted him stubbornly and he found Lud Gate closed against him. With only fifty followers, but still fighting bravely, Wyatt was forced back, until he sank down, wounded and bleeding, beside a fishstall, just outside Belle Sauvage yard. Here he was taken prisoner, and later, beheaded on Tower Hill.

The Great Fire of London, in 1666, which destroyed Old St. Paul's and so much besides, reached La Belle Sauvage. But the damage was soon repaired, and it is in this same reign of Charles II that we read of another interesting happening in the old inn yard.

In a house in the outer courtyard, Number 11, there lived a boy who was to become very famous by the name of Grinling Gibbons.

This boy used to amuse himself by carving the most lovely things out of wood, flowers, frames, boxes, and little statues. As a kind of advertisement, he made some pots of flowers, all carved in wood, and set them upon the window-sill of his room in Belle Sauvage yard.

These flowers were so finely carved and so fragile that the petals and leaves actually shook with the rattling of the coaches as they passed in and out of the yard, just like those of real flowers. Horace Walpole says that "no man before had ever given to wood the lightness of flowers."

John Evelyn, the great diary-writer, chanced to see some of these wonderful carved flowers, and introduced the boy to King Charles. From that day Grinling Gibbons became famous, and many of his carvings are still to be seen in the churches and palaces of London, and all over England.

From the time of the Restoration and onwards until the beginning of the nineteenth century, La Belle Sauvage yard was a very busy place indeed.

If you had stayed in one of the houses near, you would have been roused at all hours of the night and early morning by the stamping of hoofs, the rattle of wheels and the blare of horns.

For the coaches started every day from the inn yard and ran right across England to the west—to Bath and Bristol, to Plymouth, and Devizes, and Exeter, and Penzance.

Most famous Coaching Inn in London

La Belle Sauvage was the most famous coaching inn in all London, and its rooms were always full of visitors waiting to book seats to the fashionable watering-places of Bath and Clifton.

The old galleries must have seen many lovely ladies in powder and patches; many fine gentlemen in three-cornered hats and many-caped overcoats.

And then—railways came in and the coaches gradually disappeared. People found that they could travel faster behind steam than behind horses, however good, and the old inn was closed, since no one needed coaches any more.

A little later, the inn itself was pulled down and other buildings erected.

Here, even before the days of Little Folks, in 1830 another magazine for children was published, called the *Youth's Instructor*, a magazine of a very different kind! It was most dreadfully gloomy, without a single story or joke, and somehow I cannot believe that any girls or boys ever really *liked* it! If they did, children must have altered very much in the last hundred years.

And now, there is still the name over the high gateway, which was once the sign of a famous inn, and now stands, for us, as the name of the place where our dear magazine is published, and where a new number of it is born every month.

The Cowards

A Schoolgirl's Adventure

By Hugh Warby

"I SAY, girls, I've got such news for you!"

"News? What kind? Exciting?" Fay sat bolt upright in the hammock in which she had been swinging, and expectantly surveyed her cousin Peter.

"Good news?" chimed in Margaret, Peter's younger sister, ducking to escape collision with Fay's swinging foot.

"You may think so, and you may not," was the tantalizing reply. "It's just that Henty's staying here for the holidays!"

"Henty—staying—here!"

"Even so!"

Fay gave Peter one long, horrified stare, then she slid stiffly out of the hammock and lay flat on the grass as one in a swoon. "Water!" she gasped faintly. "Bring me smelling salts! I'm ill!"

"I noticed the earth tremble when you plumped on the grass," commented Peter rudely. "Have pity on the slumbering worms beneath."

Fay turned up her dainty nose and clutched her clipped curls with one hand. "I will be calm," she said tragically. "I must pull myself together. I pray thee tell me some more. Don't mind me—I am strong now! I can bear it!"

"Who's Henty, anyway?" demanded Margaret, mystified. "What's the fuss about?"

"He's captain of our Form at school," Peter explained. "You've heard me speak of him, kid. He's the chap whose clothes Fay hid at the sports during the swimming gala. Poor old Henty! He'd never done you any harm, either, Fay."

"Peter, don't be so silly. You know, as well as I, that I didn't do it purposely. It was his fault, anyway. He shouldn't have changed in your dressing box. How was I to guess? It seemed so simple. I was at the very door—there was no one looking—it was so easy for me to slip in, and I did want to see your face when you got back to your box and found all your clothes gone!"

"And instead, you had the pleasure of seeing Henty's face, and having to confess before the Head and the whole jolly lot of big-wigs! Oh dear! oh dear!" Peter threw back his head, held his sides, and chuckled like a crowing hen. "It was the richest piece I'd ever seen. I think they're going to bar girl cousins at the next sports!"

Fay, her cheeks burning with indignation, made a sudden dive for Peter's head, but he eluded her grasp, caught at the lowest branch of the tree, and swung himself up out of reach.

"How do you know he's here?" asked Margaret, nobly trying to restrain her tears of mirth. "And where's he staying?"

"This is his home. He lives at that huge white house on the hill—you girls were admiring it yesterday. I didn't know he came from these parts, of course. It being my first term in the Fifth, and his last, and he captain into the bargain, naturally he didn't come and confide all his family secrets in my shell-like ears."

"Well, anyway, we needn't meet him, even if we do happen to be spending the holidays at his native village. And I don't suppose if he met you out, he'd even notice you," scoffed Fay.

"That's just where you're wrong, my dear," grinned Peter, "because I met him this morning, and they've got a big house party at his home, and he hates it, and I asked him here to tea to-day—mater said I could—and he's coming!"

"You—wretch!" gasped Fay, in horrified amaze. "Whatever shall I do? I can never face him."

"Oh, don't be balmy. He's an awfully decent sort, and he'll never remember a mere trifle like you. I'm jolly glad! Two girls aren't much cop as company for a chap's holidays. We won't bother about you, once tea's over, never fear."

Despite Peter's rude speech, there was a twinkle in his eye which they did not fail to notice. A bright idea suddenly occurred to Fay. "Well, I hope you have a good time, I'm sure," she smiled. "I'm sorry I shan't be able to join you, but I promised to take a basket of strawberries to Widow John, and so——"

"You didn't say you'd take them to-day!"

"N-no. But I said one day this week, and it might rain to-morrow. Awfully sorry, and all that, but still—and that reminds me, I'd better be off and picking them now. Will you come and help me, Margaret?"

"Here, I'm on in this job!" exclaimed Peter, with alacrity swinging down from the bough.

Picking strawberries was a delightful occupation. Recent rains had spoiled the crop for the markets, but there was plenty of good fruit, notwithstanding, and the farmer from whom they had rented their cottage allowed the Blakes the full run of his strawberry beds. Peter's help in this direction was not invaluable. His motto was "Pick one and eat two," and he lived up to it. A large-sized basket was soon full, however, and immediately after dinner Fay started out on her visit.

Widow John lived alone in a very tiny house at the foot of the distant hills. She was a lovable old lady who had met trouble and conquered it, and, although she lived so far from any other human habitation, she was quite content. Her wants were simple, but she was very poor, and all kinds of people looked upon it as their privilege occasionally to take her some little delicacy. On her first day at Jollivale, Fay had met Widow John, and, always ready to help anyone in need, had promised to bring her some strawberries very soon.

The path Fay took was a very lonely lane, bordered by a narrow river on the one side and a thick wood on the other, and ideal, all the way, for playing Red Indians, fishing, birds'-nesting, and all kinds of really exciting things. Peter, indeed, sometimes came secretly and bathed in the river, always coming out so covered in mud that he had to wait until the sun baked it off before he could robe and return home. The thought of Peter's secret bathing brought Henty back to Fay's mind. Even should she live to be a hundred, she felt quite sure that the picture of that awful moment when she had guiltily laid the Form captain's missing clothes at the feet of the head master would never fade from her memory. And how the younger members of the onlookers had guffawed—roared, to be perfectly frank! And how entirely miserable Henty had looked, as if he were responsible for the whole occurrence, and felt a mean cad for getting her into a mess.

For a mere second Fay closed her eyes and grimaced. When she opened them she saw a big shadow on the sunny path, and found an extremely dirty, tramp-looking person confronting her, barring her way, in fact.

"Good a'ternoon, missie," he said, with a pull at his greyish-green slouch hat.

"Good afternoon," she returned frigidly. He appeared so very unkempt that she simply could not muster any expression of pleasure at his presence.

He gave his hat another twitch. "Might I trouble you for the time, missie?" he asked, rather shyly, Fay thought.

She glanced at her wristlet watch. It had been a present to her from her father on her last birthday, and was a specially good one because she had managed to come top in her Form the previous term. "It's one minute to a quarter to four," she said precisely.

"Missie says it's nearly quarter to four, Bill," said the man, with a jerk of his head, as though he were flinging the words at a prickly bush beside him. From behind the prickly bush appeared Bill. He was younger than his companion, and except that his teeth were not so yellow, far dirtier. "Kind of the young leddy to tell us, I'm sure, an' we're much obliged," he said, grinning. "It's nearer our tea-time than I thought. Better be getting on, hadn't we, Jem?"

Jem thought they had, and great was Fay's dismay when she discovered that their path appeared to be identical with hers.

"Goin' far, miss?" inquired Bill, conversationally.

"No—thank you."

"It's a lonely walk for a missie to take alone," said Jem.

Fay, who was beginning to wish herself back at home, suddenly had a brilliant idea for choking off her forced acquaintances. "As it happens, I am not alone," she said, smiling in her most disarming manner. This remark was, of course, perfectly true at the moment. But Jem had been stalking her behind the bushes for some considerable distance before disclosing himself, and now he only cackled. "Bill and me will keep you company a little way," he volunteered. "Won't we, Bill?"

Fay was angry, but not surprised, when

Jem took a sudden interest in her wristlet watch. It was a very fine watch, he said, and he would like to see it closer. Did it keep good time? He was doubly interested in watches, he explained, because, before he had had several terrible reverses in life which had led him to what he was at present, he had been a watchmaker of no little skill.

"P'r'aps, as a favour to a broken-down man what's had reverses, you wouldn't mind taking it off and lettin' me 'ave a better look at it?" he suggested.

This was dreadful! Fay glanced round hopelessly. There was no one in sight, and on either side was nothing but trees—thick and sombre on the one hand,

"Over them, ferociously brandishing a paddle, stood a lithe, flannel-clad figure"

Drawn by Charles Horrell

staggered for a moment, trying to regain her balance and take in the startling scene at one and the same time.

Jem and Bill were down, each rolling in a cloud of dust in the lane. Over them, ferociously brandishing a paddle, stood a lithe, flannel-clad figure.

fewer, and parting here and there to allow a glimpse of the shimmering river on the other. She had a queer sensation inside as though her dinner had stuck in a hard lump precisely in the middle of her. "I do not wish to take it off," she said coldly, and instinctively backed.

The movement proved her undoing. Jem noted it, darted forward, and seized her wrist. His grip was like iron, only greasy.

"How dare you! Leave go my wrist at once! I—oh! Help! Help!"

Bill's grubby hand descended over her mouth like a great paw. She choked wildly, and could not see because her head seemed to be swimming round and round. And then a remarkable thing happened! Bill's hand slipped away, the grasp on her wrist relaxed. . . . Fay blinked, and

"Jump in my canoe—quick!" the latter yelled to Fay. "Under the tree there. Hustle for all you're worth, and untie it!"

Fay usually strongly objected to being ordered to do anything. In her own expression, "ordering got her back up." But now she hesitated a second, no longer. She saw Bill scramble to his feet, spiteful revenge in his crafty eyes, and her boy rescuer, still brandishing the paddle, back toward the river. Then she sprinted.

The rope that tied the canoe was wet, and hard to undo. Feverishly she pulled and tugged, and at last conquered it. A glance over her shoulder showed her that the situation was desperate. The boy was retreating step by step, keeping the ruffians at bay, but never once daring to

look back. He shouted a command—"Get ready to push off"—and brought the paddle down with a mighty thwack on Bill, who had tried to creep in and close with him. Bill rolled over, stunned for the moment, but Jem rushed on.

With a sudden lightning twist, the boy flung down the paddle at Jem's feet, turned, and ran for the canoe, plunging knee-deep in mud as he pushed off.

How Fay and he managed to sqeeeze in the tiny craft, which was only made for one, without upsetting it, seemed a miracle. They were well away in the current and out of reach before Jem had recovered from tripping over the paddle. Then, for the first time, did the rescuer and rescued really look at each other, and then did both flush hotly and give vent to simultaneous exclamations.

"Henty!"

"Blake's cousin!"

Perhaps it was just as well that they were not sufficiently out of danger to indulge their mutual surprise and dismay. Bill, joined by Jem, was looking at the water thoughtfully.

"Suppose—suppose they swim out to us?" ventured Fay anxiously.

"Not they!" grinned Henty. "If the river were made of beer they might risk it. But water—no! Sit still, whatever you do," he added urgently a moment later. "I'm afraid of the thing capsizing! And I've got no paddle."

Fay obeyed him. He seemed so capable and sure of himself, and, after all, he knew the river. She sat very still, but could not help wondering what he was doing here, when Peter would be waiting for him at home.

"Will someone pick us up?" she queried, trying to appear as unconcerned as possible.

"No need," Henty assured her. "We'll bump into the opposite shore at the next bend, sure as houses. It's always a job to keep off that shore, even with a paddle."

"But—you'll be late for tea, won't you? Peter said he was expecting you about three."

To her surprise Henty flushed and stammered. "Yes—er—I shall, shan't I? I came rather farther than I—er—the current rather carried me away, as a matter of fact." He suddenly gave her a keen scrutiny. "You'll be rather late yourself, won't you?" he asked, and the corners of his mouth twitched suspiciously.

"I was going out to tea, as it happens," Fay retorted, rather sharply. She was annoyed that Henty still had that knowing twitch at the corner of his mouth.

At last he threw restraint to the winds. "Were you going out to tea because I was coming?" he asked directly. She felt suddenly hot all over, but returned his stare with outward coolness. "And was it the fault of the current that caused you to come so far out of your way?" she inquired.

Henty, being a sportsman, laughed. "No," he confessed, "it wasn't. I kept telling myself I'd turn back every minute, but I was a coward, and couldn't face it."

"You're not a coward! After the—the splendid way you chipped in this afternoon. I haven't even thanked you for that yet. It was I who was funky! I just couldn't forget that awful affair at the sports. I never felt so dreadful about anything in all my life. I wanted to tell you it was all a mistake. I made sure it was Peter's box, and Peter's things——"

"I know!" broke in Henty hastily. "Blake told me all that. He thought it was the joke of the season. But I felt such a rotter, somehow, and I could have given young Jones such a licking for buzzing off and telling the Head, before I could stop him. And—and you must have thought me a beastly little sneak." His confusion was comical.

Bump! Henty's prediction had been fulfilled. The canoe had charged at the opposite jutting bank and stuck in the soft mud. Henty, being already soaked to the knees, jumped out and stood in the mire. "Jump for it," he said, holding out his hands. "I'll help you across."

Fay took a flying leap and landed on the grassy bank. Henty tied the canoe to a tree, and clambered up to the dry grass. "I'll come along in the morning with another paddle and get her off," he said. "She'll be all right there."

Fay jumped up. "How long will that mud take to dry?" she inquired.

"Oh, it'll soon bake off in the sun," he said cheerily.

"Good!" she exclaimed. "Then, if we hurry, we shall just be in time for tea, after all!"

"Good egg!" assented Henty heartily.

IN THE WRONG BOX

Mistress Cat finds a snug spot in Mr. Dog's Home

(From a photograph)

THE WEALTH OF EGYPT

An African Curio Shop at Cairo, where are stored musical instruments, beads, bells, swords, Arab armour, shields and every sort of article found in the great Continent. To right, native artisans are fashioning the brass ware for which Cairo is famous

(*Photo: Donald McLeish*)

Winning her Colours

By CHRISTINE CHAUNDLER

CHAPTER XVI

A Man of His Word

"BUT, my dear little girl, I meant something for *yourself*," said Mr. Morris. For Pip had succeeded so far in her wild adventure. She had run Sheila's father to earth in his office and made her bold request. She had got clear of St. Cecilia's, reached the station, bought a return ticket, caught a train to town, engaged a taxi at the London terminus to take her to Mr. Morris's office, and after some palaver with clerks and office boys had eventually obtained admittance to the inner room in which the head of the firm worked.

And now she was sitting in a big arm-chair facing Mr. Morris, who, from the other side of a paper-covered desk, was gazing at her in angry perplexity.

"It *is* something for myself," said Pip. "You can't think what a weight it will be off my mind if you'll only do it. You see——" She suddenly decided to take Sheila's father into her confidence. "I—I did something most awfully mean to Sheila in the beginning of the term—before I bit her bootlace on the railway, you know, and got to like her and became her fag. I've been most frightfully sick about it, ever since Sheila's been so decent to me, and I've been simply aching to find something to do for her that will make up. If I can go back to school to-night and tell her that she can accept her old scholarship, I shall feel that I really have atoned. And then I can confess about ragging her study, and she can jaw me as much as she likes, and we can start fair and square again. You will let Sheila accept it, won't you, please?"

"I have already given Sheila her answer," said Mr. Morris stiffly. "When you go back to school to-night, you can tell her that my mind is fully made up. I do not intend that she shall accept the scholarship, and you may tell her from me that she need not hope to win my permission by sending any more of her friends to interview me in this very unorthodox manner."

"She didn't send me! I came quite on my own. She doesn't even know that I've come—unless it's got round the school by this time. Sheila's got nothing at all to do with it. It was quite my own idea. So you needn't go sending her a snarky message like that!" Pip cried hotly.

"I am glad to hear that Sheila did not send you. But, all the same, I am afraid I cannot alter my decision. Sheila is not to accept this scholarship, and if I hear any more nonsense about a musical career, I shall remove her from St. Cecilia's at once, instead of leaving her there until the end of the term." And Mr. Morris shut his mouth with great determination.

Pip gazed at him in wide-eyed dismay.

"But—but you *promised*," she said incredulously.

"My dear child, I did nothing of the kind. The promise I made to you concerned yourself alone. I was, and am, exceedingly grateful to you for saving my daughter's life. But though I shall always be only too pleased to do anything that I am able for you, yourself, I really cannot permit you to interfere in my personal affairs. From what I have heard of you, I cannot believe that you will prove the kind of child to presume upon my gratitude."

Pip was a little hazy as to what exactly presuming upon a person's gratitude might be. But she was quite clear about the purport of Mr. Morris's stilted little speech, and her lips quivered.

"You—you said 'anything,'" she reminded him reproachfully. "You said that if ever there was anything you could do for me, I was to come to you. You said you wouldn't ever refuse a request from me. And—and now you are refusing!"

Mr. Morris rose from his desk and began to pace up and down the room in a perturbed manner.

"I never intended that you should take my words in quite such a literal sense. I am very sorry—very sorry indeed—to disappoint you, but I really cannot accede to this request. It is a matter that concerns myself and Sheila alone, and I cannot permit any outside interference. Anything else I will gladly do for you, but this is impossible. Can you not see for yourself what an impossible request it is? Come now, think of something else that you would like, there's a good girl! A bicycle or a camera or"—suddenly brightening—"a doll. There is a toyshop close here where I believe we could get a really beautiful doll. We will go out together and buy the very best and biggest we can find. Now come, be a sensible little girl."

Pip looked at him more in sorrow than in anger. Fancy offering a *doll* to a person of her age. The members of Four B had long ago put away such childish things. A man who could make an idiotic offer of that sort was very nearly hopeless. Nevertheless, she made one more effort to persuade him. Disregarding the mention of dolls—the man couldn't have intended her to take that seriously—she returned again to the attack.

"You didn't *say* it was only to be something for myself. You said *anything*. Don't you remember—the day you came down to see Sheila, when we had tea in Miss Druce's room, and cakes with pink sugar and walnuts on the top? You said it when Sheila and Miss Druce were out of the room. You made me promise to come to you if ever there was anything that I wanted. I suppose—I suppose you didn't really *mean* what you said."

"I did mean it. Most certainly I meant it!" Mr. Morris was growing desperate. "I meant it then and I mean it still. The only thing is, you have put an entirely wrong construction upon my words. If you will be a sensible girl and let me buy you something for yourself, I shall be only too delighted to fulfil my promise. Suppose we go out now and do some shopping together? And afterwards we might find a really nice tea-shop which would supply us with some of those pink sugar cakes."

Pip slid down from her chair and stood facing him in a dignified way.

"No, thank you," she said sorrowfully. "If you really won't do what I ask you, I—I think I'd better be getting back to school. I'm going to get into rather a bad row for coming away, for it's frightfully against rules. Only I thought I could do something to help Sheila. She's so awfully unhappy about having to give up her musical career. And—and I thought you'd let her keep the scholarship when *I* asked you, because of your word of honour, you know."

Mr. Morris said nothing, and after gazing at him a minute, Pip turned towards the door.

"Good-bye," she said with grave dignity. "I'm sorry I asked you. I wouldn't have bothered you if I'd known you meant—dolls—and things like that. I thought you really meant just what you said. Sheila *always* keeps her word, even though she can be rather a beast sometimes. I—I never thought that Sheila's father would have broken his."

The bell of the telephone on Mr. Morris's desk chose this moment to begin to ring violently, rather spoiling the effect of Pip's last speech. With an exclamation of annoyance, though whether it was called forth by the telephone or Pip, was not quite clear, Mr. Morris pulled the instrument towards him and began to speak into it, and feeling that there was nothing further to be said, Pip walked out of the room, down the stairs, and through the outer offices into the street. There she

stood for a few moments, feeling very desolate and forlorn. It was beginning to rain, and she was cold, and tired, and hungry. She hadn't the least idea of how she was to get back to the station. She had not money enough for another taxi, and there seemed to be no omnibuses running along this particular street. Pip supposed vaguely that she would have to walk, and she started to move aimlessly along the pavement in the direction in which she thought she remembered to have come.

How long it would take her to reach the station and whether she would get there in time to catch a train back to school, Pip did not know. It wouldn't matter so very much if she couldn't get a train, Pip thought forlornly. She was in for such a ghastly row when she did get back that a train more or less did not much matter. And the dreadful part of it was, she had come on a useless errand.

"Got myself into this horrible mess and lost my hockey Colours for nothing!" Pip thought bitterly.

She had reached the end of the street by this time, and she stopped again and looked about her, wondering which way she ought to go. People brushed by her as she stood there, all of them seemingly very busy and in a very tremendous hurry to get somewhere, and frowning at Pip as they dodged by her, as though she were dreadfully in their way. Pip became suddenly very conscious of her loneliness and strangeness, and she looked up at the passers-by anxiously, in the hope of seeing someone not quite so busy of whom she might ask the way. But everybody seemed to be about some very important business, and Pip shrank back against an open doorway in despair, and wondered how in the world she was to get back to the station and catch a train for school, with nothing but twopence and a return ticket in her pocket.

And then suddenly there came a rush of footsteps behind her, and a hatless youth made a dive at her and grasped her by the arm.

"'Ere, you! You're to come back again," he panted out breathlessly.

"Back where?" asked Pip, blinking a little moisture out of her eyes and staring at him in amazement.

"Back ter Mr. Mawrus. 'E wants you," said the youth. And he urged Pip back along the pavement to the office she had just left.

Pip did not need much urging A sudden hope had sprung up in her heart, and she hurried along at the office boy's heels, breathing fast with excitement. Through the downstairs rooms and up the stairs again the boy conducted her, and after a tap at the door of the inner office, opened it and ushered her in.

"'Ere she is, sir. I caught 'er," he said, and Mr. Morris, who had been talking excitedly on the telephone when the door opened, put the receiver down and came forward with outstretched hands to meet Pip.

"My dear child, why did you run away? I never meant to let you go like that. I had an important business call put through to me just then, and it wasn't until it was over that I realized that you had gone. Thank goodness, the boy caught you! I want to take you out and give you a meal and see you safely into the train. I was just telling them to call a taxi so that I might try and find you."

Pip's face, which had been raised to his in eager anticipation, fell. This was not what she had been expecting.

"Is *that* all you wanted me for? Oh dear! And I was so hoping that it was because you were going to keep your promise after all," she said in bitter disappointment.

Mr. Morris laughed a little shamefacedly.

"Perhaps I wanted you for that, too," he said.

Pip gave him a quick look.

"Oh! Do you mean that? Do you really? Do you mean that you'll let Sheila keep the scholarship and stay on at St. Cecilia's after all?" she gasped.

Mr. Morris smiled down at her whimsically.

"Well, I've been thinking over your remarks, and it seems to me that since Sheila has such a reputation for keeping her word, the least Sheila's father can do is to follow her example," he said.

Pip gave a squeal of delight and did something which perhaps Sheila, in spite of the deep affection existing between her and her father, had never done quite so spontaneously in the whole course of her life. She made a spring at the grave and stately Mr. Morris, and twisting arms and legs about him in the most unrestrained fashion, hugged him wholeheartedly.

CHAPTER XVII

An Unexpected Obstacle

THE train began to slacken speed, and Pip realized that she had nearly reached the end of her journey. She smoothed down her coat, put her hat straight, and drew on her gloves, and then sat very upright in her corner of the carriage, bracing herself to meet the reproaches and recriminations that would soon be showered upon her. Mr. Morris had made her send a telegram to the school before she left London, stating the time of the train's arrival, and Pip had little doubt that somebody from St. Cecilia's would be awaiting her on the platform. And since no one at St. Cecilia's—except the members of the Lower Fourth, who had pledged themselves not to reveal it unless they were forced to do so—knew the reason for her expedition, the returned traveller had no doubt whatever that there would be some very unpleasant moments indeed to be gone through before she was able to explain matters.

Once those first unpleasant moments were over, however, Pip hoped that things wouldn't be so very bad. In her pocket she carried two letters addressed in Mr. Morris's handwriting, one to Miss Druce and one to Sheila, giving his unconditional consent to Sheila's accepting the scholarship and withdrawing his previous ultimatum that his daughter was to leave the school at the end of the term. Once the Head realized what was in those letters, Pip was confident that her anger would abate. She would scold, of course, and no doubt the runaway would receive appropriate punishment—but still, things would not be so bad as they would have been had she been obliged to return to school without those two all-important letters in her pocket.

Once having given in, Mr. Morris had been kindness itself. Perhaps in his heart of hearts, he was glad to have such a good excuse for not forcing matters to a climax with his daughter. Perhaps he had been feeling just a little bit ashamed of his unreasonable attitude even before Pip had bearded him in his office, and was not altogether sorry to be obliged to capitulate. Anyway, having capitulated, he was as kind and as agreeable as he could be about it. Having written the two letters and made Pip dispatch her telegram, he had taken her straightway to a restaurant, where he had plied her with all kinds of delicacies in the way of eatables, including pink sugar cakes. And then, having agreed with Pip that she had better return to St. Cecilia's as soon as possible to face the music and get it over, he had driven her to the station in a taxi and had seen her into the right train.

And now Pip had arrived at the scene of the performance, with the orchestra just tuning up to begin the overture of the music she had to face!

Somebody *was* waiting for her on the platform, and to Pip's disgusted dismay, the somebody was matron—matron looking very severe and forbidding, with her lips set in a prim tight line that Pip knew well. Pip caught sight of her as the train slid into the lighted station, and her heart sank down with a bump. Matron was a person with whom Pip never had, and never would, hit it off, and she was about the last individual whom the little girl wanted to see just then. Any of the mistresses would have been preferable to matron! You simply could not tell matron things with any hope of her understanding. Pip would have felt far happier had she been met by Miss Druce herself.

Matron's greeting was not encouraging. She caught sight of Pip almost as soon as Pip caught sight of her, and as soon as the unfortunate junior emerged from the train, she bore down upon her with grim directness.

"Here you are, Philippa. Come along at once," she said. And she gripped Pip's arm with no gentle grasp and marched her away as though Pip had been a prisoner and she her wardress.

She did not even relax the grasp when they came to the barrier, where the ticket-collector was taking the tickets. She had her own platform ticket in her hand, and she seemed to expect Pip to produce her purse and open it and get out her train ticket with only one hand. But Pip was not going to try to do that.

"I can't get my ticket while you hold me like that!" she protested with an indignant wriggle, and then matron did loosen her grasp a little so as to permit her prisoner to use both her hands. But, even so, the good lady would not let go her hold altogether; and when once the ticket was delivered up, she grasped the arm tightly again, and Pip was marched out to a waiting cab before the eyes of all the porters

and passengers, obviously and ignominiously in disgrace.

Pip was hot with humiliation and furious with anger when at last the taxi was reached. Matron pushed her inside and then climbed in herself and sank down on to the seat beside her, and, the driver having shut the door, the cab glided off. Then, and not till then, did matron let go of Pip's arm and turn to look directly at her.

"Well, miss! I hope you feel ashamed of yourself! Where have you been to and what have you been doing? That is what I should like to know!"

No doubt she would! But she wasn't going to find out from Pip *this journey*—so the little girl told herself. She would wait and tell her tale to Miss Druce, or Miss Kent, or Miss Lang, or whichever mistress she saw first when she got back to school. She certainly wasn't going to tell it now just to gratify matron's curiosity—after she'd been so perfectly *beastly,* too! And Pip set her lips firmly together and refused to open them, a course of action which did not soothe matron's wrath in the slightest! And that worthy, having said all the nasty things she could think of and thrown the most dreadful aspersions upon Pip's character, relapsed into silence as well.

The silence continued all the way up to school. Even when the taxi drew up at last in front of the main school door, matron said no word to Pip. She opened the door of the cab, and standing beside it so as to block the gangway, she took out her purse and proceeded to pay the driver his fare

"'Ere, you! You're to come back again,' he panted out breathlessly" (p. 369) *Drawn by Elizabeth Earnshaw*

Pip felt very much inclined to push past her, or to open the other door of the cab and dash up the steps into the school. But she thought that perhaps she had better control herself a little longer. In a few minutes she would be before the Head, and then she could explain everything, and she slipped her hand into her pocket and pressed the two letters which were going to mean so much. The clock in the hall began to strike while matron was engaged with the taxi-man. It was six o'clock—Pip counted the strokes and gave a little sigh of satisfaction. The school letter-box wasn't emptied till seven. There would be just nice time to explain things to Miss Druce and for Sheila to write the letter before post-time.

As the hall clock finished striking, matron finished paying the man. Then she turned to the taxi and beckoned peremptorily to Pip.

"Come out, Philippa," she said stiffly. And when Pip stepped out obediently, she grasped her tightly by the arm again and marched her through the door which a maid was holding open, and towards the central stairs. Pip held back in some alarm. This was not the way to Miss Druce's abode.

"Where are you taking me to?" she demanded suspiciously.

"If you come along you'll find out," was matron's grim response.

"But I want to see Miss Druce," Pip said.

"You'll see Miss Druce soon enough! You needn't be afraid of *that!*" said matron.

"But I want to see her now—this minute! I *must* see her. It's most frightfully important," expostulated Pip, stumbling reluctantly towards the stairs, urged thereto by matron's superior strength.

Matron made no reply to this statement. She merely tightened her grip until she forced a little squeak of pain from her prisoner, and her face took on its most forbidding expression as she said:

"If you don't do as you're told and come along this minute, Philippa, I shall call the porter to come and *carry* you upstairs."

She was quite capable of carrying out the threat, as Pip well knew, and the little girl hastened her steps somewhat. It would be too dreadfully humiliating for words to be carried upstairs by the school porter! So she came along reluctantly, allowing matron to march her up the stairs and along corridor and passage, reiterating her demand to be taken to Miss Druce, and insisting upon the importance of her errand all the way. Even then, however, Pip had not the least idea of what was before her, and it was not until matron stopped at last before the door of a little room, close to where she had her own quarters, that the least inkling of what they intended to do with her dawned upon the runaway.

The door was standing open, and matron switched on the electric light and pushed Pip into the room.

"There, miss!" the angry lady said. "There you are, and there you will stay until to-morrow morning, when Miss Druce will have had time to think what she's going to do with you. You'll find your night-things and everything you'll want for the night, including a glass of milk and some bread-and-butter, which is all the supper you'll get, and more than you deserve at that! You're to take your clothes off at once and get into bed. I will give you five minutes to undress and ten minutes to eat your supper, and then I shall be round to put out your light, so you'd better be quick about it."

"But, matron! I must see Miss Druce. I must! I must!" cried Pip, flinging herself upon the closing door in sudden horror. "It's about Sheila's scholarship, and she must know about it before the post goes out. I *must* see Miss Druce to-night! I must! I must! I must!"

"Must is not a word for little girls to use," was all matron's reply to this. "You'll see Miss Druce in the morning and not a minute before. Just do as you're told, at once, and undress and get into bed."

"But, matron, don't you understand!" Pip had grown very white. "It's about Sheila's scholarship. I've a letter for her and one for Miss Druce. They must have them, so that Sheila can write a letter to-night—truly they must! If you won't let me see Miss Druce, please take the letters to her and tell her how important they are! Please! Please! Please!"

But matron knew nothing and cared less about Sheila's scholarship. The domestic arrangements of the school were all that concerned her, and she did not even know what Pip was driving at, much less realize the importance of what she was saying. To tell the truth, she was so

shocked at Pip's latest escapade, and so angry with her for her naughty behaviour in the cab, that she did not even try to take in what Pip was frantically explaining. She waved aside the letters which Pip tried to thrust into her hands.

"I shall do nothing of the sort!" she snapped. "You are a very naughty, tiresome little girl, and it's Miss Druce's wishes that you should be treated as such. You're to stay here till Miss Druce is ready to see you in the morning." And she made as if to shut the door.

Pip clutched at the handle with a despairing cry.

"But matron, you must! You must! It's frightfully important!" she almost shrieked, and in her desperation she fought fiercely to hold open the door. But her efforts were useless. Matron laid forcible hands upon her, and after a brief struggle tore her away from the door and gave her a push which sent her staggering back half across the room. Then, before Pip could recover herself, the door was shut to with a bang. And the next moment there came the ominous sound of a key being turned in the lock.

Then for a little while, Pip lost her head. She flung herself upon the door, rattling the handle and beating upon the panels, and screaming and crying aloud in her rage and dismay. But it was all quite useless. The door was thick and strong and she could not have broken it down had she banged at it all night. Matron's quarters were so remote from the more frequented parts of the school, that it was hardly likely that her screams would attract any attention. Even if they did, matron's own room lay between her and any possible help, and matron, doubtless, would be on the look-out to intercept any would-be helper who might come by.

These reflections gradually forced themselves into Pip's mind, and presently she left off her senseless banging upon the door and tried to collect her thoughts to think of some way out of this terrible calamity. The window was her first thought, and she rushed across to it and pulled aside the blind. But there was no possible means of exit that way. The windows were not close together here as in the dormitory. It was quite impossible to step from one sill to another, and there was nothing but blank wall—not even a rainpipe or an ivy plant between the window and the ground. Pip turned away from the window with a groan of despair, and began to pace up and down the room like a little caged lion, while all kinds of desperate and useless plans for escape chased themselves through her brain.

The room in which she was imprisoned was quite small. There was only space in it for a single bed, a chest of drawers and wash-stand combined, and one small chair. It was used sometimes as a sick room for a girl who might be taken ill in the night, a temporary resting-place until she could be removed to the sick ward or the Sanatorium. And sometimes, though very rarely, it was used as matron was using it now—as a prison cell for some especially naughty delinquent. It had been made ready for the reception of the prisoner. The bed was turned down, and Pip's own nightdress and dressing-gown and bedroom slippers were laid upon the counterpane, while her brush-and-comb bag and her sponges and tooth-brush were on the wash-stand dressing-table. On the chair was a small tray containing the supper to which matron had referred, a glass of milk and two slices of thick, doorstep bread-and-butter. But Pip scarcely noticed any of these things as she cast about desperately in her mind for some way of reaching Sheila or Miss Druce, and handing over those all-important letters before the post should have gone.

Bitterly now did she regret her silence in the cab. If she had only answered matron's questions and told her where she had been and why, she would at least have been able to make matron understand the importance of her errand, and have ensured that the letters should have reached their destinations before post-time. But she had remained silent and sulky, and now matron was furious with her and wouldn't listen to a word she said. And time was getting on, and soon the last post would be gone, and Sheila's letter refusing the scholarship would have gone with it, and she would not know until it was too late that her father had said she might accept. And her career would be spoilt, and all Pip's trouble would have been for nothing, and the ragging of the study would still be unatoned for.

The tears came into Pip's eyes and overflowed, and she sank forlornly down on the edge of the bed, and, quite disregarding matron's injunctions to undress and get into it, gave herself up to despair while the

"'Oh, Miss Druce, please, please let me speak to you'" (p. 375)

precious moments sped away. But that hopeless mood did not last for very long. Pip had too much grit to let herself be beaten by circumstances while the least glimmer of hope remained. And gradually, as she sat there, a last faint gleam of hope dawned in her mind. Matron was coming back in a quarter of an hour. She was coming to see that Pip was in bed, and to turn out the lights. And to do that she would have to unlock the door and open it a little, anyway. That would give Pip one more chance. Not to appeal to matron. Pip felt that that was useless — at any rate, far too problematical to risk. Her plan was much more daring than that. She would turn out the light before matron came, and crouch down by the door; and when matron had opened the door and was feeling about for the switch, she would make a sudden rush and dart past her, and trust to her running powers to reach Miss Druce's presence before her angry gaoler could capture her again.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Fate of the Hockey Colours

AS the plan took form in her mind, Pip became her own alert self again. She flung off her hat and coat—the fewer clothes she had on the better would be her chance of escaping when matron opened the door —transferred the two letters to the pocket of her frock, and then, turning off the light, she crouched down in the corner close beside the door, and waited breathlessly for her opportunity to arrive.

Scarcely had she taken up her position than there came footsteps outside and the sound of a key being inserted in the lock, and Pip drew a deep breath of excitement and prepared for her rush. The next moment the door opened, and matron's voice uttered an exclamation of annoyance.

"Why have you turned off the light, you

naughty girl——" Pip's gaoler began angrily; but she never finished the sentence. Something made a rush past her, nearly sweeping her off her feet. She clutched at the doorpost to save herself, and before she realized what had happened Pip was half-way down the corridor.

"Philippa! How dare you! Come back! Come back at once!" cried matron, starting gamely in pursuit. But Pip had no intention of coming back. She flew on, racing down the corridors and rounding corners at breakneck speed, and matron flew after her, keeping up in the most wonderful way and uttering angry cries and shouts as she ran.

Once Pip was nearly caught. A door just ahead of her opened suddenly and a mistress, it was Miss Parr, came out into the corridor. Matron called to her to stop Pip, and after a moment's surprised incomprehension, the games mistress made an effort to do so. But that one moment's delay was just enough to enable the fugitive to slip past her. And then the chase began again, with Miss Parr, as well as matron, in pursuit this time—the former only a yard or two behind the quarry, as Pip realized with dismay.

Pip had had a tiring day and a long one, and she wasn't by any means in her best running form. But somehow she meant to get to Miss Druce before matron caught her, and gathering all her failing energies together she fled on, reaching the head of the flight of stairs just in front of the games mistress. The stairs gave her an advantage, for she flung herself upon the banisters and slid down them at a pace which could not be equalled by either Miss Parr or matron, both of whom were forced to descend in a more orthodox manner. Pip reached the bottom of the flight with her lead increased by several yards, and all might have gone well had not the Middle Fourth, released for some reason earlier than usual from preparation that evening, happened at that identical moment to be crossing the hall.

The members of Four B's next senior form came flocking through the doorway through which Pip had hoped to pass, and Miss Parr, half-way down the stairs, called to them to intercept the runaway. For a moment they hesitated to do so. Then someone exclaimed:

"It's Pip Martin!" And that settled the question. Whatever chivalrous instinct the members of Middle Four might have had to give the fugitive a sporting chance of escape vanished on the instant. The Middle Fourth cherished an undying hatred of Four B, and of Pip Martin in particular—not altogether without reason, for, truth to tell, the lower form was more than a match for its seniors in matters of repartee. With one accord its members flung themselves upon Pip. Edith Hart, Pip's rival in hockey, was the first to grab hold of her. Two or three of the others clutched at her, also, and, just when she was on the eve of success, Pip found herself held fast.

"Let me go! Let me go!" she shrieked, beating at them furiously, and kicking and wriggling and plunging, this way and that, in a vain attempt to free herself from their grasp. Shrill squeaks and screams broke out as Pip's blows went home; but the Middle Fourth girls did not relinquish their hold. Instead, they crowded still more closely round their prisoner, and a regular rough and tumble took place in the hall, of which Pip was the unwilling centre. Some fifteen or sixteen girls surged hither and thither, most of them rather enjoying the "rag"—except when Pip found some specially tender spot—and all of them shouting and calling out orders and helping to create a confusion such as did not generally take place in the public thoroughfares of St. Cecilia's.

Miss Parr and matron, who had reached the spot by this time, endeavoured to force their way through the throng to restore order. But before they could do so, there came an unexpected interruption.

"Girls! Girls! What *is* the meaning of this?" came in a horrified voice from the background. And there, standing at the head of the passage which led to her private wing, was Miss Druce.

In a moment, as though by magic, the noise in the hall was quelled, and Pip, catching sight of the Head Mistress, felt hope spring to life again in her heart. Wrenching herself free from Middle Four's detaining hands, the prisoner made a rush and got clear of the throng and flew across the hall to the Head.

"Oh, Miss Druce, please, please let me speak to you! It's most frightfully important, and I'm awfully sorry, but I've been to see Mr. Morris, and he says Sheila

may accept the scholarship, and oh, please, please send for her and make her write the letter while there's time," she gasped, blurting it all out breathlessly, the while she clutched at the Head Mistress's arm.

Miss Druce's face grew stern as she looked down at her.

"Philippa, you here! How is this? I asked matron to send you to bed as soon as you returned from your naughty escapade."

"And so I did, Miss Druce." Matron was scarcely less breathless than Pip, as she pushed her way forward and laid a heavy hand on the fugitive's shoulder. "I put her in the little room close to mine as you asked me to do. But when I went to see if she was in bed, the naughty child escaped—nearly knocked me down as I opened the door, and rushed down the passage like a little whirlwind, and neither Miss Parr nor I was able to catch her."

"Oh, Philippa!" began Miss Druce; but Pip, clinging tightly to her arm, interrupted her.

"Oh, please, Miss Druce, please, please let me explain! I'm most awfully sorry, and I don't mind being punished the least bit if only you'll let me tell you! But I must do it now, for it's long past six, and the post goes at seven, and Mr. Morris says that Sheila may accept the scholarship after all. See, here's a letter for her from Mr. Morris, and one for you, too. Please, please read them quickly and see all about it."

And she thrust the two letters into the Head Mistress's hands.

"You naughty girl! Didn't I tell you that you couldn't give any letters to Miss Druce till the morning!" matron stormed. And giving Pip a violent shake, she tried to drag her away. But Miss Druce stopped her with uplifted hand.

"Wait a minute, matron. I think Philippa has something to tell me that may be important. Yes, Philippa! What were you saying about Sheila's scholarship? And what are these letters?"

"They're for you," said Pip, with a sob of relief. She had gained her object. Now, at least, the matter would be in Miss Druce's hands. "One for you and one for Sheila—from Sheila's father—to say that Sheila may accept the scholarship after all!"

"From Sheila's father?" repeated the Head. "Have you been to see Mr. Morris, then? Is that where you have been all day?"

"Yes," said Pip. "I'm awfully sorry I had to break rules in the way I did, but I was so afraid you wouldn't let me go if I came to ask you first. And it was so awfully important. He said he'd do anything I asked, because of Sheila's bootlace, you know. So I asked him that. And he's going to let her, and he's written about it. And oh, please, do be quick and send for Sheila or the post will be gone before she's had time to write and accept."

Miss Druce turned to matron.

"I think, matron, that, after all, I shall have to interview Philippa to-night. It appears as though she has not been quite so deliberately naughty and disobedient as we feared. I will take her with me to my room, and will somebody please find Sheila Morris and send her to me at once? Miss Parr, will you be so kind? Thank you very much. Tell her to be very quick as the matter seems to be urgent. Matron, will you see that these girls disperse quietly? I will let you know what is to happen to Philippa later. Now Philippa, my dear, come with me."

And holding Pip's hot little hand in her own, the Head Mistress bore her off to her own room to investigate the mystery.

* * * *

After all, Pip did not sleep in the punishment-room that night. Instead, she slept as usual in her own bed in her own cubicle in her own dormitory—and very glad indeed she was to find herself safely tucked away beneath the bedclothes at last. Tucked away, too, by no less a person than Sheila Morris, who had come up to the dormitory with the truant when Miss Druce had done with her, to see her safely into bed. For Pip looked so white and tired when at last the explanations were all over, that Miss Druce had suggested that she had better go straight to bed instead of going into school again that night.

"You must take it as a punishment, too, dear," the Head said; "for what you did was really very naughty, although you did it with such excellent intention. I cannot have my juniors running up to town like that when the fancy takes them, and had you gone for any other reason, I should have been obliged to have punished you very severely. As it is, I am going to let you off lightly. I think that you

really believed you were doing the best thing, and certainly you have done me, as well as Sheila, a very great service. You shall not spend the night in the punishment room as I had intended. You shall sleep as usual in your own dormitory. But you must go to bed now, and your supper shall be sent up to you when you are in bed. That must be your punishment. In the morning we will have a talk together, and I must try and make you understand how very unwise it was of you to take such an important matter into your own hands instead of consulting me. But that is all that I am going to do to you this time! You seem to realize that in doing this service for Sheila you have lost your chance of winning your hockey Colours, and that, I think, will be punishment enough. Sheila, my dear, now that your letter is written and posted, will you take Philippa up to bed and see that she gets there quickly? Matron has her night-things. Perhaps you will run and fetch them for Philippa."

"Yes, Miss Druce," Sheila had answered. Then she had hesitated.

"Am I—am I to tell matron anything?" she asked with some diffidence.

"No." Miss Druce smiled at her understandingly. "Take Philippa to the dormitory first, and then go and fetch her things. I am going to see matron now myself, and by the time you arrive she will have Philippa's clothes all ready for you."

Then, as Pip prepared to leave the room, the Head Mistress put her hand gently on her shoulder.

"Thank you very much, Philippa, for saving me from losing one of my senior girls," she said.

Later on came Sheila's thanks, when Pip, tucked up in bed, had disposed of the supper which matron had rather grudgingly sent round.

"Pip I—I don't know how to thank you," the prefect said, sitting on the edge of Pip's bed. "You've been a little brick—an absolute brick! Fancy giving up your chance of winning your Colours just for me! I wish things could be arranged so that you might still play in the match."

"They can't be, though," said Pip resignedly. "And it wouldn't really be fair on the team if they could. You see, I haven't practised with them for more than a week, and Edith Hart has. I don't like Edith much—in fact, all of us in Four B think she's rather a beast" (although her arms were black and blue from the industrious manner in which Susie and Aileen pinched them, Pip was not yet quite cured of using the forbidden word). "But, all the same, it would be rather rough luck on her if she were to be turned out now."

"Yes, I suppose it would be. You're a sporting little kid, though, Pip, to see that. Well, perhaps next term we shall be able to manage things better. You deserve a place in the team, Pip, if ever a junior did! There are two debts I owe you now. Pip, I can never, never thank you enough for either of them."

Pip gave an uncomfortable little wriggle. Then suddenly she decided to make her confession at once and get all the disagreeable things over.

"You needn't thank me so awfully much," she said, growing very red and hot. "Anybody who had thought of it would have bitten your bootlace on the railway that night, if they had had teeth as sharp as mine. It wasn't specially for you that I did it. If anything I rather hated you at that time. And as for the scholarship, well, if you want to know—I went up to see your father about that chiefly because I wanted to make up to you for something beastly I'd done in the beginning of the term. Sheila—it was me who ragged your study that night!"

Her confession, however, did not have the surprising effect upon the prefect that Pip had expected. Sheila, indeed, did not seem surprised at all. She merely nodded her head and said quietly:

"Yes, I knew."

"You knew!" cried Pip, staring at her in amazement. "Who told you, then?"

"No one," said Sheila. "I found it out for myself. Though I admit it was a long time before it dawned upon me."

"Did you—did you know I wasn't being quite fair and square about it, when you asked me if I had broken my parole?" Pip asked in a low voice.

"No, not then. Not for some time after that. It wasn't until you began to fag for me that I guessed it."

"How *did* you guess it?" asked Pip.

"Well, you knew so well where everything was in my study. You knew where things were which even Moira didn't know, and I wondered how on earth you'd found out. And then one day, you were kneeling down in front of the fire, making

toast for me. You were wearing your gym dress, and you burnt the toast, and you took a knife out of your pocket to scrape it and I told you to put it away and get a proper one. You'd been dissecting a frog or something with yours! Don't you remember?"

"Yes, I remember!" Pip looked puzzled. "But still, I can't see how in the world you found out from that."

"Can't you! Well, you took something else out of your pocket beside your knife, though I don't think you noticed it. You scattered a handful of feathers over the hearth. And I wondered how you'd managed to get feathers in your pocket. Only I was feeling rather down in the dumps at that time, about my scholarship and father's being so determined that I shouldn't accept it even if I won one. And I didn't say anything. But after you had gone, I looked at them again and I saw that they were the same as those that had been in my cushion. I couldn't mistake them, for they'd been all over my study for days before I was able to get rid of the last. And then I remembered that you'd been wearing your gym dress the night I caught you outside on my window-sill. And I began to put two and two together, and for some time past I've been almost certain that it was you."

"I didn't break my parole, though. I'd just come back from doing it when you caught me," Pip said hastily. "And—and I didn't *quite* tell a fib when you asked me the next day."

"I know you didn't. It wasn't quite fair and square of you, of course, as you said just now, and I'm very glad indeed that you see that. But look here, there's no need to talk about disagreeable subjects now. In fact, we mustn't talk about any subjects at all! You must lie down and go to sleep, and I must go downstairs and get some supper. All the others will have finished ages ago. Good-night, you plucky, sporting little kid! Thank you ever so much for all you've done for me."

She put her arm round Pip and kissed her. And Pip, though she objected to kissing as a general rule, submitted to the caress with a good grace. Indeed, she even prolonged it a little by catching Sheila's hand and asking her a question as the prefect was about to go.

"And—and you've quite forgiven me for ragging your study? You're really not ratty with me at all?" she asked in a humble tone.

"Of course I'm not," said Sheila, laughing to conceal the fact that she was just a little moved by emotion. "One isn't ratty with a person who has saved one's life—and one's career into the bargain! And now, Pip, you simply must lie down and go to sleep. It's Miss Druce who will be ratty if I stay here talking to you much longer."

So Pip went to sleep that night with the comforting assurance that all her sins were forgiven, and that when she arose on the morrow she could start life afresh.

It was rather bitter to see Edith Hart's name posted up on the board next day as right inner for the Second Eleven match. But Pip bore the disappointment bravely and Four B resigned itself as cheerfully as it might to the open triumphing of Middle Four. It was helped to do so by a delightfully surprising incident that happened that afternoon, soon after the second delivery of letters had taken place. Sheila Morris, supported by Christabel and Meg, came into the dining-hall where the girls were gathering for tea and walked across to the table where Pip was standing with her friends.

"Pip," said Sheila. "I've just had a letter and parcel from my father. When he came down to see me that day, he and I talked over what we could do for you. And we decided that you couldn't refuse to take a present from *me*—just a small gift to show my gratitude to you for saving my life. Father said that he would see about it, and after he'd seen you off yesterday afternoon he found that the present we'd decided upon had arrived. He posted it off at once so that I could give it to you to console you a little in case you got into disgrace. Look, here it is. I know you haven't got one, and I hope you'll like it."

And she put into Pip's hand something which almost took Four B's breath away—a beautiful little gold wristlet watch in a velvet case.

"For me?" gasped Pip, her eyes nearly starting out of her head, for this was a watch amongst watches. Four B decided afterwards that it must have cost quite five pounds, little dreaming that it's value was nearly ten times that amount. "Oh, Sheila, is it really, really for me?"

"Yes, if you'll accept it, and won't refuse it scornfully as you refused all

poor father's other offered gifts. You'll have to take it, Pip, for look here——" And she opened the back of the watch to show Pip her own name and the date of the railway incident engraved inside.

Well, of course, it was impossible to refuse a gift given so gracefully. Even the heroine of a story-book would be justified in accepting a reward when it was presented so tactfully as that. Pip grew incoherent in her gratitude and delight, and Four B was almost as pleased as she was. When Middle Four "swanked" of its Second Eleven hockey player, Four B "swanked" of its heroine and her wonderful gold watch, and was greatly consoled thereby.

And after all, the Fates proved kind—kinder perhaps than graceless Pip, and her almost equally graceless companions in Four B, deserved. As Pip was getting ready to go up to the field to watch the hockey match when the eventful afternoon arrived—getting ready slowly and reluctantly, for it was going to be dreadfully galling to watch Edith Hart playing in her place—Susie and Rita and some of the other members of Four B came rushing into the lobby, frantically shrieking her name.

"Pip! Pip! Oh, here you are!" they all shouted at once as they caught sight of her. "Hurry up! Hurry up to the field! Ivy Turner's sprained her ankle and Miss Parr says you're to get your stick and go and take her place."

"What!" cried Pip. "Play in the match! *I'm* to play in the match?"

"Yes, yes!" clamoured Four B, dancing around her in delight. "Buck up! Do buck up! You're all ready, aren't you? Here's your stick. Do hurry up. The other team's there and they're only waiting for you to begin."

"But I don't understand! How did Ivy sprain her ankle? I saw her going up to the field just now with the rest of the team. Are you quite sure you're not having me on?"

"Of course we're not! We wouldn't have you on over a thing like that," cried Rita, and Susie added:

"She did it coming out of the pav. Slipped on the steps or something just as the team was going out to play. Luckily it happened before play began, so it's quite all right to put in somebody else. But do buck up, Pip, or Miss Parr will be fearfully ratty with you! She was rather squiffy when she found that you weren't up on the field."

Pip bucked up, then, and reached the field in record time, and played her very best, so justifying the inclusion of a junior in the Second Eleven team, and qualifying for the award of the precious scrap of ribbon which was presented to every girl at St. Cecilia's who represented the school in an outside match.

And that is the manner in which Pip Martin of Four B—the very first junior at the College to do so—won her Colours.

THE END

A Splendid new School Story

THE TESTING OF THE TORMENT

By

ELSIE OXENHAM

will appear in my next volume.

THE ADVENTURES of BINGO DOG

By CONSTANCE EGAN

NO. 6.—BINGO AND TISHY IN LONDON TOWN

BINGO DOG seemed no nearer to finding the kind of home he wanted than when he ran away from Laburnum Cottage.

The trouble about the home business was that the people who wanted to adopt Bingo would have nothing to do with friend Tishy, the little green lizard. And the school who wanted Tishy for keeps wouldn't even look at Bingo.

So there they were, playing in a daisy field on a bright summer day, Bingo chasing bees and butterflies and barking with joy, and Tishy basking in the sun and eating insects.

"We'll find someone who wants us, some day, so why worry?" woofed Bingo.

"I never worry," squeaked Tishy, snapping at a passing fly.

"The only thing that worries me is my dinner," continued Bingo. "Where am I to find dinner, with not a sign of a house for miles?"

"Why not try caterpillars?" suggested Tishy. "Caterpillars are good and juicy, and there are plenty round here."

Now Bingo Dog saw a sly look in Tishy's eye, and he knew that the lizard was pulling his leg. The hair on his back ruffled with annoyance, and he was just going to be really angry, when he heard a *toof—toof—toof*, then the sound of a brake, and he knew that a motor-car had stopped somewhere quite near. A motor-car meant people, and people *might* mean dinner. It did! The noise of the car had come from a wood which ran along one side of the field. Bingo Dog, all on the alert, streaked for the spot.

In the wood stood a very magnificent car. A chauffeur was taking things out of a luncheon basket and setting them out on a snowy white cloth under a beech tree, while a stout little man and his very fat wife wandered away to see the view from the edge of the wood.

Bingo Dog was very hungry. His mouth watered and his eyes glistened when he saw the chicken and ham and sausage rolls spread out for those two stout people.

"They'll never eat all that," thought Bingo, "and this dog's hungry."

So when the chauffeur turned his back to draw a cork from a bottle, he just

nipped up and carried away that cold roasted chicken. Away he raced, back to Tishy in the sunny field. And I regret to say he was very, very pleased with himself, the scoundrel!

Bingo Dog made short work of that beautifully roasted chicken.

"Tishy, old bean," he said, as he toyed with the last bit of wing, "let's go to London."

Tishy woke with a start.

"London!" he gasped; "but London's a long way off, isn't it?"

"Yes, miles and miles," answered Bingo shortly.

"Then how could we get there?" asked Tishy.

"In a car," quoth Bingo. "I like travelling by car. Most convenient. We'll get a lift in those people's car. They come from London—I heard the lady say how refreshing the air was here, after the heat of London."

"I love heat," murmured Tishy.

"Good," said Bingo; "and London's the place to find a fortune and a home. I'll take you there, old friend; come on."

"Oh, clever Bingo! Motht noble Bingo!" lisped Tishy, very impressed.

Bingo picked up his little friend and made for the wood again.

The stout little man and his very fat wife were asleep with their mouths open and their backs against two tall trees. The chauffeur was smoking a cigarette some little way off. Bingo stole into the very magnificent car, and he and Tishy crept under one of the seats and were soon fast asleep.

When Bingo woke they were on their way to London town. The stout little man and his very fat wife were discussing the loss of the beautifully roasted chicken.

"I wonder," said she, "whether it was stolen by man or beast."

"You have wondered that at least fifty times," replied her husband.

"But it was really most annoying, Henry," she went on. "I particularly fancied chicken for lunch. I really do wonder——"

"Yes, I know," interrupted her husband, "but we shall never find out." And I don't believe they ever would have found out if it hadn't been for Tishy.

Tishy sneezed!

The very fat lady bounced from her seat like a ball.

"What's that, Henry?" she cried in alarm.

"What's what?" inquired Henry, who was nearly asleep.

"*Tish—tish—tishy!*" If you have never heard a lizard sneeze, you can't imagine what a queer little sound it is.

Tishy crept from his hiding-place to get a little more air. He rested on the lady's plump foot. He thought it was a little cushion. The lady felt a tickle, looked down, saw Tishy and screamed. She shook her foot so violently that Tishy rolled off.

"It's a reptile. Stop!" yelled the lady.

The chauffeur stopped the car, and the stout little man and his very fat wife nearly fell out of the car in their hurry.

"It's all up," growled Bingo. "What on earth did you want to sneeze for?"

"Didn't want to sneeze," grumbled Tishy; "it just came."

"It's a dog," cried the man when he heard Bingo growl.

"It was no dog on my foot," said the lady excitedly. "I tell you it was a reptile. A thing like a crocodile."

And then Bingo Dog, knowing the car would be searched, crawled from under the seat, picking Tishy off the floor of the car as he came.

"There, my dear, what did I tell you?" laughed the husband. "It *is* a dog, and a big ugly mongrel at that. I wouldn't mind betting that's the thief that stole our chicken."

But Bingo Dog wasn't taking any risks. He didn't like being called a thief and an ugly mongrel.

Before anyone could say another word he was off, and I need hardly tell you he took Tishy with him. Through a hole in the hedge he squeezed, across a field

and out into a little lane. Away and away.

Presently he paused beside a stream, dropped Tishy, and took a long drink.

"Pity we couldn't go all the way to London in that car," he sighed, licking his lips; "but never mind, we'll get there somehow."

There was a tiny sound in the distance. Bingo cocked his funny head on one side, pricked up his ears and listened.

The sound grew louder and louder. *Choo—choo—choo—choo—choo!*

"A train," he yapped, "or my name's not Bingo. We'll follow the line till we come to a station and see if we can get on a train, and get to London that way."

"Oh, clever Bingo!" breathed Tishy.

"That's all right," barked Bingo airily.

It all happened just as Bingo had said. They got to a station, managed to slip into a carriage and under the seat of a train waiting in the station, and so they came to London town that very afternoon. It was just a piece of luck that it happened to be a London train and not one going in the opposite direction, but of course Tishy thought it was all due to Bingo's cleverness.

There were such crowds of people at the London station that they slipped past the barrier unnoticed, and out into the hot London street.

Bingo ran gaily on, Tishy in mouth and tail awag, till they came to a lovely green park.

"Here we are," he barked joyously as he gently laid Tishy on the grass; "this is as good as the country, and fortunes are always made in London."

Bingo ran round and round the park like a mad thing. He was so pleased to get out of that stuffy railway carriage.

Bingo Dog thought Regent's Park the jolliest place in the world. There were lots of people and children about, and boats on the canal.

Suddenly he remembered Tishy and went back to look for him, but his little green friend had gone. Bingo ran barking all over the place, but Tishy had quite disappeared. Then he came to the edge of the canal, and right out there in the middle of the water he saw a green object. It must be Tishy!

Bingo Dog plunged in and swam out to the little green object. He grabbed it in his mouth, and swam for the bank.

When he reached the water's edge, he found he was carrying a little green boat, and not Tishy at all.

A small boy ran up to him. "Good dog!" he said, and took the boat. "Look, mum," he cried, "he's saved my boat. Isn't he a topping dog!"

"He hasn't a collar," said the mother, "and his coat wants brushing badly. Perhaps he's a stray dog."

"May we keep him, then?" asked the boy eagerly. "I think he's ripping!"

"Well, dear, isn't he rather a mongrel?" smiled the mother.

"I like mongrels best, mum," said the boy. "If he's not claimed may I have him for my birthday? You promised me a dog, and I'd like this one better than any."

Bingo wagged his tail and licked the boy's hand. He had found the right person to love him at last, because, of course, Bingo knew no one would claim him. So they took him home, and Bingo was the happiest dog in the world.

And what of Tishy, the little green lizard? We left him in Regent's Park, didn't we? Well, Tishy went exploring on his own, and by and by he made his way into the Zoological Gardens which join Regent's Park. Of course, Tishy didn't know anything about the Zoo, but presently, as he was crawling along a gravelly path, a keeper came along and picked him up.

"Hi!" he called to another keeper, "here's an escaped lizard," and Tishy was put among the lizards at the Zoo. There he found his own lizard mother and lots of brothers and sisters. It was like going home. And Tishy was happy ever after.

"Look pleasant, please!"

Drawn by Harry Rountree

GOAL ! !

Cup Final in Desertville

(Drawn by Frederick Parker)

Miss Mackenzie's Tiger

Work—Play—and an Adventure

By Ralph Simmonds

I SUPPOSE the real reason why at first we didn't like Miss Mackenzie was the fact that she was a "blue-stocking." A good many people would say that that was the very reason we should like and respect her, of course. But I know that Helen and Brenda and myself, Muriel, are not very enthusiastic about "learned" girls—at least, we weren't then, though we now admit that there are lovable exceptions to the general rule.

Miss Mackenzie came from Girton with the object of educating us, or finishing my education and teaching the others, and from the first we were prejudiced against her by the letters after her name. There were four, written boldly and firmly under her signature, representing, I suppose, much wisdom.

We studied those letters for some time and wondered what Miss Mackenzie would be like. Helen is rather fond of reading character from handwriting. I must say she is rather good at it when it comes to the handwriting of friends she knows, and we therefore listened to her delineation of Miss Mackenzie's character with interest.

First of all, Helen got a magnifying glass and a tape-measure and a pair of compasses. Then taking the letter she made several careful measurements, examining the writing very closely under the glass in the meanwhile. After that she frowned and shook her head.

"A bad character," I suggested hopefully. "The sort that mother wouldn't have here—deceitful, or something?"

Helen wrinkled her forehead.

"That's possible, I think," she answered, holding the letter at full length. "One never knows—destiny lies mysteriously hidden" (Helen had heard that from a palmist at Brighton), "but at present I can only tell you that she's hard and cold."

Brenda shivered.

"Like Miss Tredge," she said. Miss Tredge writes "Notes on the Poor Law," or something like that, for a paper.

"Yes," Helen continued dreamily. "She's stern, and calculating and unemotional. One of those women with short hair and high cheek-bones. She's probably tall and bony; in fact, with hard hands and a grating voice. Nothing but a wisdom-machine."

"Her degrees must be degrees of frost, then," suggested Brenda. But I pointed out that it was no time for joking if all this was true. It looked as if we were in for a bad time.

Well, I don't know how it could have happened. Helen said Miss Mackenzie must have disguised her writing—which very fact showed that she was horrid. For Miss Mackenzie wasn't tall and bony, or harsh, or hard! When she walked into the drawing-room the next evening with mother, we beheld, to our astonishment, a plump, short, fair-haired girl, whose eyes were the colour of fresh violets, and whose only outward claim to wisdom was a pair of rimless pince-nez.

She was such a soft little thing that we could hardly believe we had heard her name properly. In her light blue, filmy dress, she looked absurdly tiny—like a Persian kitten, somehow—and when I, as the eldest, went to meet her, she only came up to my shoulder.

We were so surprised that the frigid greeting we had prepared thawed, so to speak, and we soon found ourselves listening to Miss Mackenzie's fine piano-playing, and asking for more. On the whole, we had quite an amiable evening.

But at bedtime Brenda performed a *pas seul* in the middle of my room, and, ending it with a coquettish little fan dance, knocked various ornaments off the mantelpiece. When the damage had been repaired she apologized.

"You see," she said, "we shan't be under Spartan discipline after all. We shall do just as we want with Miss Mackenzie. And I'm not going to start work to-morrow, because I want to go on the links in the morning, and that always makes me tired. I shall wait until the day after."

"There was a 'crack' and the ball went racing away over the green turf into the orchard"

"I'll come with you, I think," I answered. "Miss Mackenzie won't want to start to-morrow, surely."

I was mistaken in that, however. She came down to breakfast brimful of enthusiasm, for it was a lovely day—a blue and gold day, all sky and sunshine. Brenda hinted several times at her expedition, but I've never known a person to take hints more slowly than Miss Mackenzie. So, finally, she had to speak out.

"Miss Mackenzie," she said. "It seems a pity not to enjoy the weather, doesn't it?"

Miss Mackenzie smiled.

"Just what I was thinking, Brenda," she answered. "We might almost manage to work under the tree near the peach-wall. We can try, at any rate."

Helen giggled and Brenda frowned.

"You're not going to work to-day, surely?"

"Work to-day? Why, certainly; that's what I've come here for, you know; and if we were to have a holiday every fine day—well, the world would be a funny place to live in, Brenda."

"But, Miss Mackenzie, I wanted to go on the links. I was going with Muriel. I've made all my plans."

"When did you make them?" asked Miss Mackenzie, smiling. I think she smiled because she was nervous, though her tone was joking.

Brenda stared hard at her plate and said sulkily:

"Last night."

Miss Mackenzie stopped smiling now.

"I am sorry, dear," she said, "but you ought to have been ready to start work to-day. You've had a long rest, I hear."

"We've been working by ourselves," Helen said. Again Miss Mackenzie smiled.

"Yes, of course," she said pleasantly; "but that generally means a holiday, doesn't it, girls?" In our case it was very true. But no one likes to be told so, and we felt rather savage. "In any case," she continued, "we must work to-day."

Brenda stared hard at her plate and said quietly:

"I don't think I shall. I hate having plans spoilt."

"I hate having my plans spoilt, too," was Miss Mackenzie's reply. It was a new voice that she used.

I looked at her, and I must say I was astonished at the change in her face. Her lips were pressed close together and her chin seemed somehow "squarer," while there was a faint tinge of pink on each cheek. Her eyes looked extraordinarily determined—like Napoleon's—so that I forgot how little she was.

"You will work with me, Brenda," she remarked.

And the strange part of it was that Brenda, after glancing at Miss Mackenzie, did! She said afterwards that she'd been mesmerized. For that reason she didn't like Miss Mackenzie any better, and, indeed, finding somehow that she made us all do things, we positively detested her before long.

Then, of course, as might have been expected from a person of "degrees" and letters, she was by no means good or even mediocre at games—at least, except one.

We're an awfully keen trio when it comes to games—quite as keen as our brothers. So, since Miss Mackenzie, though outwardly wearing the velvet glove, yet ruled us with a hidden rod of iron, we quite believed that she must be keen, too. I have seen a girl like her at hockey, whom I thought would be quite out of things, develop suddenly into a demon, and score goal after goal for a losing side. I had hopes that Miss Mackenzie would be the same sort of person. But when I mentioned the matter she said she "had once played croquet!"

It was at tea-time, and we laughed like anything.

"Croquet! Why, that's the game you play when you're convalescent after a sprained ankle, isn't it?" exclaimed Brenda.

Miss Mackenzie opened her eyes, and Helen explained what kind of games we meant.

"There's hockey and golf," she said, "and tennis and cricket. We have great fun with cricket. We've a girls' club here, and we play against the men—only they play left-handed, you know. We've got a game soon, in fact."

"No—I don't play games," answered Miss Mackenzie, hesitatingly.

"Didn't you play at Girton, then?" I said.

She shook her head.

"There was so much to do," she answered. "And I never had the opportunity."

"I'm sorry," I said. "I thought you would have played."

I suppose my voice must have rung with pathos or disappointment or something, for Miss Mackenzie looked quite hurt, and put two lumps of sugar into my tea—although I never take any at all. Brenda and Helen, too, remembering a little commotion at French conversation that day—an argument over the irregular verbs, I think it was—began to talk very loudly about all kinds of games to impress on Miss Mackenzie her ignorance. So presently the latter said:

"I—I'm quite willing to learn, girls, if you'll teach me—any game you like. I'll do my best. I should like to be able to play something."

It was quite pathetic to hear her say that, and so, feeling rather ashamed of myself, I said I'd teach her tennis. After tea, therefore, we went out on to the lawn, and with Brenda and Helen looking politely on, and pitying her in a gushing way they have sometimes, I beat Miss Mackenzie in ten games before she scored at all. And then it was only because I tried a patent backhanded screw-volley of my own, which was perfect in theory, but nearly sprained my wrist in practice. After that I suggested cricket.

We fetched the cricket things, and explained at length the rules of the game. Miss Mackenzie, after announcing that she understood perfectly well, took the bat, and I bowled. There was a "crack" and the ball went racing away over the green turf into the orchard. Miss Mackenzie was more surprised than we were.

"I can't understand it," she said. "I shut my eyes, I'm sure."

We told her how bad it was to do that, and she prepared to bat once more.

I don't know how it was; but we soon saw that we had actually found a game that our governess could play, although she did shut her eyes very often at the critical moment. Brenda and Helen both bowled, but Miss Mackenzie still hit balls into the orchard. At supper-time, when the scented twilight was coming down over the world and brown moths were flitting across the garden, she had only been out three times.

I know a little about cricket. In fact, I'm captain of our girls' team, and my brother Bob says I'm good enough for his second eleven. So I lost no time in asking Miss Mackenzie to play in our forthcoming match with the men's club here, of which dad is captain.

She smiled quite prettily when she saw that I wasn't joking

"I should only spoil it, though," she said.

I pointed out to her that if I

thought that I shouldn't have asked her to play. People are so silly sometimes.

"Well, Muriel," she said, "it's very, very nice of you. And I—I should rather like to try. And I'll do my very best."

II

ON the afternoon of the match we were all as merry as a flock of starlings, as, for the first time, we felt that we were going to beat dad's team. We had never done so before, because though they always insisted upon playing left-handed, they always seemed to play better that way than in any other against us.

I told dad that if they played in the ordinary way we might beat them—the only hundred he ever scored was against my bowling the year before; but he didn't look upon things in that light at all.

This year, however, we girls were quite good, and when we scored 160 runs we weren't at all surprised—only optimistic. Miss Mackenzie made 20 quite well, and Brenda became so friendly that she gave her the last plate of strawberries and cream. And while I was still congratulating Brenda on that, "the men" went in.

I think it must have been the level ground or something — perhaps the weather. At any rate, I know it wasn't so easy as we expected to get them out. Bob played with one hand and scored 50 before I caught him, and dad, chuckling all the while, simply enjoyed himself. Slowly the runs mounted up. It was like watching a rising and irresistible tide, and, as the others expected a great deal from me, I felt rather like King Canute, and was about as successful! But presently some of the men, becoming careless, were run out, and so it came about that at length they had only four runs to make when their last man, Donald Hunt, was in.

It was an awful moment when I bowled —except, perhaps, to him! I saw him half smile, and lift his bat, and knew that it was all over, as he hit hard and true towards the tent where the onlookers were sitting. Then Helen clapped her hands and called:

"Oh! Miss Mackenzie will catch him!"

The ball was falling straight towards her. It was a rather hard catch. But she could, at any rate, stop the boundary. And as she had made so many runs I was already beginning to clap her, when, to my horror, she shrank back as the ball fell. She put one hand timidly out half-way towards it, just like a kitten putting its paw out to a wind-blown leaf, and then stepped aside. And, of course, it bounded on to the tent, just as we gasped with disappointment. Miss Mackenzie was afraid! And she had lost the match for us.

As we walked off the field she came running up to me.

"Oh, Muriel," she said. "Muriel—I am so very sorry. It was—my cowardice—I—I——"

I said that it didn't matter in the least, in just the sort of voice mother uses when a visitor breaks some valuable china or upsets a flower vase. But Helen was not quite so forgiving!

"Brenda ought to have eaten those strawberries herself," she murmured. "It was an easy catch."

Donald Hunt, however, who heard the last remark, did not agree at all.

"It was very hard," he said seriously. "And Miss Mackenzie only did what you others might very easily have done." Then he turned to her and said: "I'm glad you didn't try to catch it, Miss Mackenzie. I shouldn't like it to have hurt you."

And they looked at each other—well, you know how. Brenda whispered:

"I see now why she didn't try."

But I didn't say anything. I rather like Donald myself!

* * * *

It was four days later when we all set out on a picnic expedition to Brackley Wood, on bicycles. It was perfect weather for a ride, and with the breeze whistling in our ears and all the world bright and sunny around us, we had a glorious time.

Miss Mackenzie was with us. At least, I should say that she started with us. But her riding was always of the slow and serious kind.

We others rode fast and merrily, and Miss Mackenzie was soon some distance behind, a blue patch on the road. Presently, indeed, we lost sight of her altogether, as we simply flew down Brackley Hill towards our goal. This lay in front of us, a mass of emerald leaf and brown branch, with here and there the silver thread of a stream gleaming among the trunks as it ran down from the sloping purple downs that rolled across the horizon, beyond the cornfields.

Brackley Wood is famous for its scenery and its wild flowers. We were looking

forward to an afternoon's pleasure in its shade, and once there we lost no time in carrying out the plan. Before long, the white cloth was gleaming on the grass, and the baskets were unpacked.

Brenda was unwrapping a pork pie and I was putting out the peaches, when *it* happened. Helen suddenly shrieked and upset a jug of home-made lemonade. We looked up in astonishment, and there, not twenty yards away, watching us with a self-satisfied gleam in his eye, was a full-grown tiger!

You know that feeling you have when you wake from a dream of falling down a precipice—a sudden "hollow" start! I felt just like that — and I don't know, thank goodness, whatever I looked like.

When I think of it now I must admit that the animal made a rather fine picture. He was a startling splash of colour in the bright sunlight—a splash of gingery and white fur, with horrible scarlet mouth slightly open.

Time after time I said it, before Brenda and Helen seemed to understand. And then they were too frightened to think over the advice, or they would, I know, have insisted on staying with me. As it was, they began to creep away. Presently the strain was too much for Helen, and she shrieked and ran. The tiger's lips drew back farther. I saw its teeth as it growled. I thought I should have fainted.

"We looked up in astonishment, and there, not twenty yards away, was a full-grown tiger!"

Drawn by Arch Webb

But we didn't think much of the beauty of the spectacle, as you may guess. Had we been in India it might have been different. But in England, in quiet Brackley Wood, one doesn't expect to find tigers haunting the green glades, and we were literally petrified.

We knelt there staring at the animal for *years!* And how our hearts throbbed! Still, the animal stood motionless. Twice I tried to speak, but could not utter a sound. At length, however, I managed to jerk out a sentence—and I was as hoarse as a rook.

"Helen—try and g—get away to the tree . . . the oak tree—behind. Slowly! And you, Brenda . . . I'll come, too, when you're up."

(I was the eldest, you see, so it was my business to stay. Not that I liked it, by any means.)

But I didn't, and the scraping and creaking in the oak tree behind me told me that Helen was climbing to safety. I heard Brenda sobbing, but dared not move my eyes from the tiger to see if she were safe. "Help me! Oh, help me!" I heard her gasp to Helen.

There was a violent commotion among the leaves, a cracking and a thud, as Brenda slipped and fell to the ground. The noise aroused the tiger, and my heart literally leapt, as the animal uttered the most frightful, gurgling growl, and stepped silently towards me. Then it stopped again and began to swing its head rhythmically from side to side. It was sickening to watch. I think I shrieked, and then I heard Brenda cry out:

"Muriel—dear Muriel! Come up now —we're—up. Oh, do—do come! It—it—will hurt. Please come."

Helen was crying.

I moved, intending to creep backwards. But the tiger saw the motion. His head stopped swinging. He growled and half sank down. He was going to spring! There was nothing in the world then but the tiger and myself—and the sudden vision of a slight, blue-clad figure that swept before me on a bicycle, and stopped.

"Miss Mackenzie!" Brenda shrieked.

I knelt there unable to move, for my legs and arms seemed like iron. I heard the tiger growl again, as it crouched and shuffled, preparing to spring upon its new enemy. And then the little lady whom we had scorned for missing a catch did the bravest thing I ever saw. She wheeled her bicycle carelessly between me and the tiger, and leaning over the saddle, cried sternly to the tiger to "go down!"

Very naturally the latter was annoyed at the command. It bared its teeth, but rose from the crouching position, watching the newcomer suspiciously.

"Get back to the tree at once, Muriel. As high as you can. At once, mind!"

It was that "steel" voice that Brenda said mesmerized her. I had heard it before, and now I couldn't help obeying it. I began to creep slowly away, over the remaining few yards. Miss Mackenzie was talking to the tiger in a monotonous sing-song voice, and I saw her hand go to her pocket and come away with a scent bottle and a handkerchief. I knew that the scent bottle contained eau-de-cologne. I thought that Miss Mackenzie must be fainting.

But she was very far from doing that. Instead, she wrenched out the stopper, the bicycle leaning against her skirt the while, and she poured the scent on to the handkerchief. Then, just as I reached the tree, she cast the fragrant cambric boldly at the tiger's feet. I think I have read that wild animals are fascinated by certain scents. But I should never have been cool enough to remember it then. Miss Mackenzie did, however, and at that critical moment when the animal was uncertain whether to spring or examine the handkerchief, she never moved.

The tiger growled, showed its teeth and crouched. Then its nose wrinkled, as it smelt the eau-de-cologne. Its tail ceased suddenly to lash from side to side, and it stretched one paw to the handkerchief and pulled it to its mouth, sniffing eagerly! Miss Mackenzie glanced round at me, and seeing that I was well on the way to safety, smiled as brightly as if she were saying "Good morning," and then began to walk very quietly away herself, with the bicycle.

Farther and farther away she crept. Still the tiger sniffed at the cambric. A little farther still—another yard. Then she stepped upon a twig and it cracked. The animal looked up, spurning the handkerchief with its feet. There was a flash of yellow as it bounded forward, and a roar.

Miss Mackenzie shrieked and ran back. The animal seemed to swoop through the air. I saw its white teeth, its neck stretched out, and its tail sailing behind. Then there was a crash as it fell headlong on to the bicycle and such a clatter as I never heard before. Its paws had gone through the wheels, and spokes, chain, and pedals were clinging in one spiky chaos to its feet as it struggled madly to get away. I shrieked, and, simultaneously, there came a "Bang! bang! bang!" from our right, as Donald Hunt, hatless and breathless, and carrying a gun, ran out of the wood, followed by several others. The tiger roared and plunged in the ruins of the bicycle, and I saw a stain of red . . . and then Helen fainted, and I had to hold her in the tree.

* * * *

When it was all over, Miss Mackenzie and Donald Hunt helped us down. Though she was flushed and breathless, and her eyes were sparkling very much, she did not seem to be upset. We, whom she had saved, were more frightened.

The tiger, it seemed, had escaped from Lord Hambledon's private menagerie at his grounds some miles away, and men had been after it all that morning. Donald had joined in the chase. I think he knew Miss Mackenzie was out on the road!

At any rate, however that may be, he won his reward shortly afterwards. And now we are awfully sorry Miss Mackenzie is going. We are going to give her the best wedding present we can find, because of her bravery. And I shall never say again that a girl with degrees is a coward Very likely she is braver than I am!

Circumstantial Evidence

A School Story

By

Dora Martin

"DORIS! Janet! *Do* catch them!" Natalie Jackson dashed to and fro in frantic pursuit of several pieces of notepaper. The wind had caught them as they lay on one of the seats round the asphalt netball pitch. The little group of girls scattered, and in a few moments returned triumphantly.

"Good! They're all here—no, they're not. Letty, you had the one of Smithie. What did you do with it?"

Letty looked at Natalie, then at the seat.

"Natalie, I'm frightfully sorry, I——"

"Have you got it, or haven't you?"

Letty shook her head apologetically. "I put it on the seat when we ran after the others," she began.

"*You donkey!*" Natalie condemned her slowly and expressively.

"I didn't think of the wind," wailed the guilty one. "Perhaps——" she began, then looked wildly about her. "Why, look! Over by the flower-pots outside the conservatory."

Sure enough, between the pots fluttered another piece of paper.

"Oh, quick, quick! Before the wind——"

The four girls sped across the asphalt towards that fluttering paper. When they were within four or five yards a sudden draught caught it and sent it whirling over to the edge of the tennis courts. Then, again, over the grass and towards the corner which led to the front of the school.

Horrors!

The four stopped, as though pulled up by invisible wires, and stood panting.

A white hand appeared round the angle of the wall, carelessly picked up the piece of paper, then withdrew.

The four stood staring hopelessly at the corner, expecting to see they knew not what. Then they looked at each other.

"Oh, Natalie, and it's all my fault!"

"Do be quiet, Letty! Do you remember if it had my name on?"

"No, it didn't; I'm perfectly sure!" Letty was relieved to be able to be even of the slightest assistance.

"Then perhaps whoever it was won't know who did it, and perhaps they won't know whom it is meant to——"

"And perhaps, and perhaps," mimicked Janet. "What is the good of perhapsing? I remember that you'd written 'Smithie' underneath it and—— But still, there's always a chance in these things that the result won't be so bad as it might be."

"This result will, though." Natalie turned away and the others followed her.

"Why should it be?" demanded Janet.

"Well, I believe—I'm not perfectly certain—but I believe it was picked up by Miss Raines."

"Natalie!" burst from the other three.

"If it was, then all is up, and I might just as well get into sackcloth and ashes at the very first opportunity. But we've got to find out if it was. Letty!" Letty jumped a trifle nervously as Natalie swung round to her. "You're the cause of it all, so you've jolly well got to find out if it was Rainyday."

"But how?"

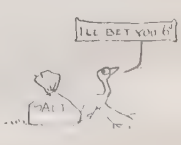
"I don't mind how, but do it quickly. I shall be grey if I'm kept in suspense much longer. Here, run and fetch this ball, it'll be an excuse." Natalie flung a stray tennis ball as hard as she could, and Letty trotted obediently after it. The three watched her pass the corner, pick up the ball, and then looked at her questioningly as she ran towards them.

She nodded.

"Truly?" Natalie saw her last forlorn hope drifting away.

"She is the only one there, and her chair is quite near the corner. She could have reached it quite easily, without getting up." Letty fidgeted with the ball in her hand. "Shall I ask her for——"

"Letty, when you've stopped being so weakened by the sun——" began Natalie irritably, then went on in her usual tone: "You see, the only chance is that she won't know who did it; and if you asked her for the piece of paper she picked up just now, a piece of paper with a drawing of



Smithie *and* her feet"—Natalie had to chuckle when she thought of it—"she would at once know that it must be one of us four. That would be uncomfortable. We mustn't let her know I did it; if she did, then I should say:

"'Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness!
This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope——'"

"Do you really think you'd be expelled?" gasped Letty, interrupting Natalie in the full tide of her quotation.

"Something very much like it. It didn't strike me before, you know, but I suppose it *is* rather risky to caricature the Head, especially as I did; and then, when a person like Rainyday gets it—she hates me—well——" Natalie broke off. "We've got to get it back."

"Get it back? But Natalie, how?"

"We've got to get it back," she repeated, "and before next week. I've got some caricatures in the school mag., and if she sees those she'll guess at once, and——"

"But she might not say anything."

"Janet, she might not, but she might. And now it's two o'clock. Remember, we've got to get it back!"

* * *

I ought to explain that Miss Raines, otherwise Rainyday, was the Domestic Science mistress at Lyndhurst School. She had come at the beginning of the term, but although she had become very popular and was liked by nearly everybody, there was something strained in her relationship with IVa. In her own mind she had set them apart as a Form with which she must be firm and not relax discipline in the slightest degree. And in IVa there was a girl whom she looked upon as a danger to her authority—a girl who was popular, and who, if she once gained one advantage over the mistress in charge, would speedily have the rest of the Form with her. Down would go authority, and order would fly to the winds. Thus thought Miss Raines. The girl was Natalie Jackson.

Had you asked Rainyday her reasons for this opinion she would have quoted the incident of the wastepaper basket on the first day of the term. In case her description of the affair might be prejudiced, I had better tell you myself.

Natalie had been perched on the edge of the basket, surrounded by the rest of the Form on that memorable occasion. Miss Raines, the new mistress, had entered unexpectedly, and on hearing her voice and trying to rise hastily Natalie had tipped backwards and had become helplessly wedged in the basket. The sight of her struggles sent the other girls into roars of laughter, and when at last the basket tipped over and Natalie was prostrate at Miss Raines's feet, they were overcome. Miss Raines had hastily come to the conclusion that this was studied impertinence and left the room, while the girls assisted unfortunate Natalie to her feet and exhausted their untimely mirth.

Thus it was that poor Natalie was so convinced that disaster would follow if Miss Raines discovered that she was the owner of the caricature, and she became absolutely possessed with the idea of regaining it. She felt sure she could—she must.

The first thing a mistress would do, she thought, would be to put it in her desk. She must gain an opportunity of putting this theory to the test, and during the lunch hour of the next day she posted Janet at one end of the corridor which led to the Domestic Science kitchen, Doris at the other, while Letty was told off to patrol the path outside the kitchen windows. Unfortunately these windows were large, and lower than usual, so that a person walking along the path could quite easily see all that was going on in the room. However, after lunch most people were in the playing-fields, and with Letty as an additional precaution Natalie felt quite safe.

After one or two false alarms, during which her heart beat at an alarming rate, Natalie got as far as the kitchen door and peeped in through one of the glass panels.

"It's all right," she whispered to Janet. "Now go to the end. I shan't be a minute."

Then she opened the door and walked in. The desk was near one of the windows, but nobody but Letty was outside, so she lifted the lid and began her search, head well bent. Suddenly she stiffened as she heard somebody humming "I know a bank." It was Letty's signal that danger was near. There was no time to shut the desk—whoever it was, was too near. She must trust to luck that they would not notice the lid of the desk sticking up. She crouched down by the wall and counted the beats of her heart as she heard footsteps pass the window. She was on the

"'You had better come out quietly or I shall call for the police'"

point of standing up again when, pressed against the glass of the door, she saw Janet's agonized face. Then it disappeared.

Steps along the corridor. A hand on the handle.

"Miss Raines!" The handle rattled as she turned round. "Ah, I thought it was you. I have just received the photographs we had taken of the school, and thought you would like to see them."

Miss Raines walked with Miss Smithers away from the kitchen along the corridor, and Natalie rose to her feet a trifle shakily and drew a deep breath. Then she shut the desk and, leaving the kitchen, almost collapsed in the arms of her chums.

"Some squeak!" was Doris's comment; "but was it any good?"

"Not a sign of it!" replied Natalie glumly. "Where else would she put it, do you think?"

"Well, if it isn't in her desk you can be pretty certain that, if she hasn't destroyed it, it will be in her room."

"Of course, Janet—her room! I didn't think of that. But I might just as well say goodbye to it now, for I simply can't live through another time like that just now. She will find out—it's no good! When the mag. comes out she'll know." The thought of the consequences, however, was a spur to Natalie's failing courage. She was desperate, and into her brown eyes

there crept a look of determination. "I *will* get it!" she said.

* * *

It was during that afternoon's prep that the idea came to Natalie. After all, the drawing was hers; she had a perfect right to regain possession of it by any means within her power. The drawing was in Rainyday's room—then to that room she would go. She almost smiled at the thought of the dismay this announcement would cause the other three. Enjoyment of this left little time for common sense and all its reasons against her plan.

"It's quite impossible! Natalie, you'd never dare!" This from Janet, after the gasp of astonishment mixed with a hint of admiration which Natalie had anticipated.

"If she caught you, you'd be in a far worse scrape——"

"Just what I think, Doris. And pray when are you going—now?" Letty sarcastically inquired.

"It's no good to make all this fuss; I'm going. Of course, it must be at night, and before Rainyday goes to bed. It should be quite easy, and it won't take long to slip upstairs.

The others desisted; they knew that once Natalie had made up her mind it was hopeless to remonstrate, but they trembled for the consequences.

Natalie herself had no qualms—at least, she hadn't at tea-time, and after tea she was only a wee bit nervous. Bed-time came, and by nine o'clock there was silence in her dorm. Quarter past. Natalie felt a strange reluctance overcoming her.

"Natalie, *do* be careful. I wouldn't go if I were you!" came in a whisper from the next bed.

That settled it. She slid out of bed, groped for her dressing-gown and slippers, and with a slight shiver prepared for her raid on Rainyday's room.

As she stood outside the door of her dorm. a laugh from the mistress's sitting-room petrified her, and she stood tip-toe, one hand against the wall. Nothing happened, and she continued along the corridor, past Smithie's room, past the other dorm. to Rainyday's door. She opened it quietly and stood on the threshold. She had forgotten that she could not see in the dark. There was nothing else to do but to switch on the electric light.

She blinked, then set to work. Every sound sent waves of heat over her, and left her cold and shivery. Her hands shook as she pulled open the drawers and peeped hastily inside.

A door opened and shut downstairs.

Natalie turned swiftly, catching her breath, and started at the sight of a white, strained face in the mirror. She realized it was herself.

Steps coming up the stairs.

The face in the mirror stared back at her desperately. She glanced about. The wardrobe! Just as the footsteps passed the next room, the wardrobe door was silently pulled to.

"How careless of me to have left the light on!" Rainyday murmured to herself as she entered, and crossed the room to the dressing-table.

Natalie pressed herself against the back of the wardrobe and stood like a statue, afraid to breathe, wondering—wondering. Her ears strained to catch the slightest sound. Rainyday then walked by the wardrobe on her way out of the room. Natalie heard the click as she switched off the light, and in the flood of relief that swept over her she dismissed Rainyday from her mind.

She took a deep breath as she stepped out of her hiding-place, and crept across the room. Her best plan would be to leave the drawing to take care of itself, and fly back to her dorm.

Sheer instinct made her stoop suddenly as the light once more flooded the room. Luckily she was hidden as she squatted there by the bed, which lay between herself and whoever entered. From the corner of her eye she noticed that the wardrobe door had swung open.

"Ah!"

The exclamation was in Rainyday's voice.

Natalie shivered and crouched nearer the floor.

"You had better come out quietly or I shall call for the police. You cannot escape by the window, it is too high." She had not come farther into the room, but remained standing by the door. Natalie could imagine her eyes searching every corner of the room for the burglars, and prayed that she would not call for assistance.

Silence. The seconds thudded on.

There was a movement at the door, and in a sudden panic Natalie attempted to slide under the bed. She tugged at the girdle of her dressing-gown—it had caught round the leg of the bed.

As she heard Rainyday approach she was only conscious of one thing—she must not, whatever happened, let her face be seen.

A rustle behind her. A last desperate tug and the girdle broke. She dived forward. So did Rainyday. A touch on her leg. Another desperate plunge forward. Another plunge from her pursuer. The hand slid down her leg to her slipper. She kicked violently, and shot out from under the other side of the bed as Rainyday advanced from the rear. The bed was a low one and Rainyday, though young and agile, was in difficulties.

Natalie reached the door, snapped off the light and fled.

As she dived into her bed she realized that the victory was not to her. It lay in the hands of the enemy, who also held a dressing-gown tassel and a pale blue bedroom slipper.

Natalie groaned in spirit, and a tear, forced from her by the depths of her misery, soaked into the pillow.

* * *

The next day she walked in fear. At the sound of approaching footsteps her heart would leap uncomfortably and she would wait for Rainyday's voice, or imagine a firm hand would descend upon her shoulder, or perhaps, even, that there would be a message from the Head.

All day did Natalie wait, and still did not hear the voice, nor feel the hand, nor receive the dread summons to present herself at the study.

Once during the day she caught sight of Rainyday. It was at lunch, and she was sitting enveloped in a cloud of gloomy forebodings. Glancing up she met the eyes of Rainyday, and flushed hotly, then paled, while each separate hair on her head seemed about to stiffen with horror. She had no idea of the appealing look in her own eyes, nor of the question they were silently asking.

Rainyday pitied her.

That night Natalie's dreams were very terrible ones, full of Smithies with huge flat feet pounding after her, and Rainydays waiting in every nook and corner.

She awoke absolutely wearied. This might be the last day she would be at the school. The Mag. would be out, so that even if the slipper had not convinced Rainyday of the identity of the unflattering artist she would know to-day. Natalie sighed heavily, then dived under her pillow for her handkerchief.

It was during the quarter of an hour break that the dread summons from the Head came, in the shape of Helen Strange, one of the prefects.

"Natalie, Miss Smithers would like to see you in the study. Hurry up, now!"

"All right, Helen," answered Natalie miserably.

She closed her desk. The worst had come. Of course she would be expelled.

She felt rather sick as she saw the study door in front of her. Would Rainyday be there, and would——

Taking a deep breath to nerve herself, she knocked, then entered.

"Natalie, Miss Raines——"

Natalie's trembling knees almost gave way, and she knocked clumsily against one of the chairs.

Miss Smithers looked at her with concern.

"Aren't you feeling well, Natalie?"

The victim shook her head miserably and longed to get it all over.

"I think, perhaps, you had better not do any more work to-day——"

Then it was! She was to be expelled, and not allowed to mix with the others before she went. Every shred of hope fell from her in that awful moment.

"Miss Raines," continued the Head, "has gone out for me, and asked me if I would give you this as it was rather important. Tell Miss Colbert that I have excused you from lessons for the rest of the day."

Miss Smithers turned back to her work, and Natalie stared stupidly at the brown paper parcel in her hand. Then she turned unsteadily and fled.

The others were waiting for her.

Without a word they watched Natalie, as with shaking fingers she unrolled the brown paper. Out fell a tassel, a blue bedroom slipper, and an envelope.

"Circumstantial evidence," read Letty in a puzzled voice, as she handed the envelope to Natalie.

She opened it, and took out some torn scraps of paper. They had been the caricature. Light dawned on Natalie suddenly.

"Circumstantial evidence," she murmured as she screwed them up in her hand. "Then she isn't——" she paused, and her face lit up. Then "Rainyday's a sport!" she announced solemnly.

And the others didn't attempt to contradict her.

DO & DARE Have a Golf Pic-nic

"There you are, Do! Just the very spot for a Pic-nic." "My word," chuckled Do, "What lovely short grass." "– And look!" shouted Dare, "A hole to make a fire in"
"That's right Dare, you lay the things out, I'll soon boil the kettle"
"Will you leave the food alone Podge!" "Thanks I'm having the pick of the Basket" Podge seemed to say
Podge got the next one
"O-O-O! what's that?" shouted Do as a golf ball caught him on the head
"Did you throw that ball Dad?" enquired Do as Mother & Father came on the scene. "What ARE you children doing on this putting green?" "Do you know what you've done?" and Dad got ever so angry..
"You've raised a lump on my head" was all that Do could say.
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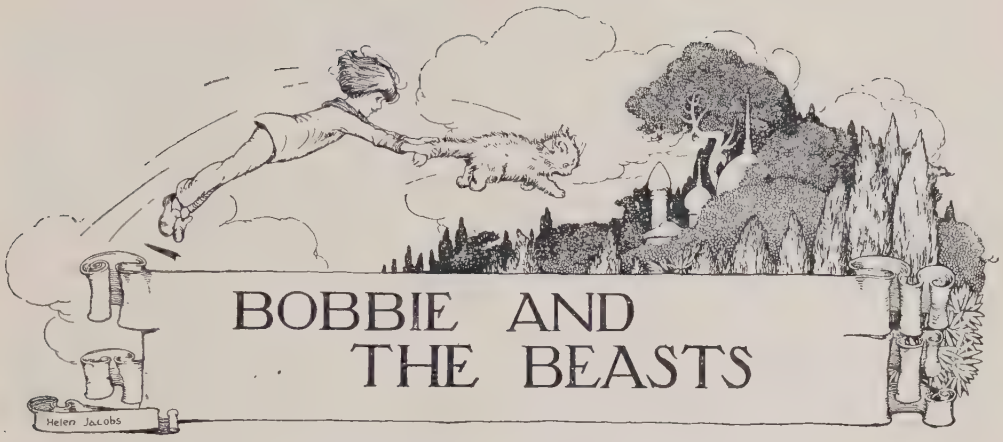

BOBBIE AND THE BEASTS

By Violet M. Methley

NO. 6.—BOBBIE AND THE BEARS

BOBBIE sat up in bed, eating his supper, and it was very late and very dark, because he had been with nurse to see the fireworks.

Nurse had brought him his basin of bread-and-milk and said :

"Now eat it up and switch off the light and go to sleep, like a good boy. I'll just look in on my way up to bed."

Bobbie did what he was told—or, at least, not quite.

Because he switched off the light *before* he ate his bread-and-milk, and he didn't go to sleep like a good boy at all. Quite the contrary.

It was such a lovely night, and the little boy loved to look at the stars, which were very big and very bright. His bed was quite close to the window and he could see lots of sky.

And in the middle of the sky was the Great Bear, which is so beautifully easy to see. Bobbie was looking at it whilst he ate his bread-and-milk, and trying to make out which was the Little Bear.

He was looking at it so much that he didn't see something *much* nearer —something that was right on the bed.

He didn't even know there was a something at all, until he felt a very wet nose touch his hand. . . .

Then Bobbie jumped and looked, and the wet nose was in his bread-and-milk basin, and the something the wet nose belonged to was a very fat, very furry, snow-white Baby Bear. Yes, it really was—Bobbie was just as much surprised as you can possibly be.

The Baby Bear nuzzled at his fingers and snuffled and spoke in a Baby-Bearish voice.

"You *are* greedy!" it said. "You've eaten up nearly all my bread-and-milk."

"Oh, please, I thought it was mine!" Bobbie said.

"It wasn't!" the Baby Bear said sulkily. "And I'm *so* hungry."

It sat up on the other side of the basin with its paws dangling, looking so soft and white and fluffy and miserable that Bobbie felt quite miserable too.

"I'm very sorry," he said. "I didn't know, or I wouldn't. And, please, where did you come from?"

"I came from the sky, of course," said the Baby Bear. "And it's *so* cold up there to-night, and I *did* want my bread-and-milk."

"Do you live in the sky?" asked Bobbie, sitting up, and cuddling his knees.

"'Course I do!" the Baby Bear

answered crossly. "Haven't you seen me there, with my mother ? "

" Oh, do you mean you're the Little Bear—*really ?* " Bobbie asked. " The one in the stars ? "

" 'Course I am ! " the Baby Bear answered, licking away at what was left of the bread-and-milk with a very long tongue.

" And is the Great Bear your mother ? " Bobbie asked.

" 'Course she is ! " said the Little Bear, more crossly still. " What a lot of silly questions you ask ! There were three of us once, but the Middle-sized Bear wouldn't come to the sky. He said it was too cold. So he stayed in Fairy-Beast-Land, and sometimes we go and see him there."

" Oh, then could you take me with you ? " Bobbie asked. " I do so want to go again."

" 'Course we could ! " the Baby Bear said, polishing off the very last drops of milk from the edges of the basin. " But I can't go alone—I'm too small. I'll call my mother."

The fat little creature waddled to the window and put up its nose to the sky, and gave a long whimpering whine three times. And at the third time something came in through the window and Bobbie gave a very startled :

" Ooo-ooh ! "

For it was the Great Bear, bigger and whiter than any Polar Bear Bobbie had ever seen, or heard of, or thought of. If she had not looked so kind and gentle the little boy would have been dreadfully frightened, but he wasn't.

" What do you want ? " the Great Bear asked, in a deep, deep voice.

" *He* wants to go to Fairy-Beast-Land," the Little Bear said, pointing with one paw at Bobbie.

" Please, it's the Elephant's Hairs from Fairy-Beast-Land that I want so very much," Bobbie said. " To make Daddy and Mummy and Miss Ferguson and Sarah find all the things they want."

Now, the Great Bear was the very first Fairy Beast who didn't shake her head at once and say that she couldn't possibly help Bobbie to find the Elephant's Hair.

" I *might* be able to do something," she said in the deep, deep voice. " At any rate, I could take you to Baloo, and *he* knows the Elephants well. Come ! "

So Bobbie climbed on to the back of the Little Bear, and the Little Bear climbed on to the back of the Great Bear, and, somehow, they went sailing away through the air.

Then—plomp ! Bobbie found himself standing on his feet, and the night and the dark and the stars had gone, and it was all sunshiny, and he was in Fairy-Beast-Land quite safely. It *was* nice to be there again !

This was a part where he had not been before, all forests and rocks, and great trees and a lovely, piney smell. And a big brown bear was waddling along, rooting with his nose amongst the leaves.

" That's the Middle-sized Bear," the Little Bear said. " When we were the Three Bears we were all the same colour, but living in the sky near the North Pole, where it is so very cold, has turned us white. *He* won't come there ; so now that Goldilocks is married he's the Snow-White-and-Rose-Red Bear, and he likes that better. Hullo ! Look what's coming ! "

Bobbie looked—and he really *was* frightened for a minute.

A most terrible-looking creature was coming through the forest, with long, shaggy hair, and fierce red eyes, and long teeth like tusks.

" Don't be afraid," the Great Bear said, in her kind, deep voice. " It's only the Beast—and you know how kind he was really to Beauty and everyone."

" Oh ! " Bobbie said, with great relief. " Yes, I *love* the poor Beast. But I thought he'd turned into a Prince."

"Only in the daytime," said the Great Bear. "At night he comes back to Fairy-Beast-Land."

"And where's Beaut——" Bobbie began, and then quite forgot what he was going to say.

Because at that moment something yellow and fluffy suddenly tumbled out of the bushes by the path, and turned head-over-heels three times.

It ended up, sitting straight in front of Bobbie, with its legs sticking out stiffly on each side, and it was a small bright-yellow Bear, with black beady eyes and the most comical face you can imagine.

You would have known who it was at once, just as Bobbie did.

"Oh, Teddy Bear, darling Teddy Bear!" he cried, and ran to pick it up and hug it.

All Teddies are nice, but you have no idea how lovely and cuddlesome a real live one can be, when it laughs and chuckles and twinkles its black beady eyes—just as you have always expected that your own Teddy might do some day.

Bobbie was so happy sitting on the path and playing with the Teddy that he really forgot why he had come to Fairy-Beast-Land until the Great Bear said:

"We must go and find Baloo. He is the only Bear who can help us to get the Elephant's Hairs."

So Bobbie jumped up, still hugging the Teddy, and the Great Bear walked on one side, and the Little Bear trotted on the other, and they all set off to look for Baloo.

They went on and on until they came to a place which was all great rocks and hot sunshine, rather like the Mappin Terraces at the Zoo. And on one of these rocks a big brown Bear was lying, looking sleepy and wise and kind.

"That is Baloo," the Great Bear said, and then all of a sudden Bobbie remembered.

"Oh, do you mean he's the 'Jungle-Book' bear who was Mowgli's friend?" he cried eagerly, and the Little Bear said:

"'Course he is! There's only one Baloo."

You can just imagine how delighted Bobbie was, because he simply loved the "Jungle-Books" and Baloo. And Baloo blinked at him lazily and pleasantly and said:

"What do you want here, Man-child?"

"Please, I want some Elephant's Hairs," Bobbie said shyly.

"Do you want them for yourself?" Baloo asked.

"No, for Mummy and Daddy and Sarah and Miss Ferguson," Bobbie answered, and Baloo nodded, looking very wise.

"That makes *all* the difference," he said. "Well, I know the Elephant-people well, and I will see what I can do for you. But it may take some time—they live in a very far-away part of Fairy-Beast-Land, and it is difficult to find Hathi the Elephant. You must wait here for me, and be patient."

So Baloo got down from his rock, very slowly and lazily, and shambled slowly away, swinging from side to side. And the Great Bear and the Little Bear and the Teddy Bear and Bobbie sat in the sun and waited for him to come back.

"Shall I tell you a story?" the Great Bear said, and you can just imagine what Bobbie answered! He cuddled up between the Little Bear and the Teddy, and the Great Bear told them stories in her deep, deep voice, wonderful stories about the stars and the North Pole, and the icebergs and the penguins, and the whales.

But I cannot write down those stories now—another time, maybe.

And before the last story was finished Bobbie saw Baloo coming back, swinging from side to side as he walked. And,

when he came nearer, Bobbie saw that he carried something in his mouth. And when he came nearer still, Bobbie saw that it was four long, black, bristly hairs!

Baloo laid them down very carefully on the ground beside the little boy.

"There!" he said. "Those are the hairs which Hathi combed out when he did his hair this morning. He did not really want to let me have them, but I told him they were not for yourself, so that was all right."

"Oh, *thank* you!" Bobbie cried. "Thank you so very, very, very much. I do think the Bears are much the nicest people in Fairy-Beast-Land, and I do wish I could do something to please you."

"You can," Baloo said. "My brother is in the Zoo, and you can take him my love, and an extra big bun, when you go there next."

(And I may as well tell you at once that Bobbie *did!*)

So now he had the hairs which he had tried to get for such ages and ages, and the Great Bear and the Little Bear took him back to the edge of Fairy-Beast-Land and he jumped over.

Next instant Bobbie was back in his bed, and the Bears in their proper places in the sky. It is wonderful how quickly fairy people do things! And there was Nurse with a candle.

"You ought to be asleep, like a good boy, Master Bobbie," she said. "But I'm glad to see you've finished up all your nice bread-and-milk."

Bobbie didn't tell her that the Little Bear had done it. He was too busy looking for the four Elephant's Hairs—and he couldn't find them. You can fancy how disappointed Bobbie was!

But the very next morning Mummy woke him up by kissing him, and she said:

"I've splendid news, old boy! Daddy has found just the very job he wanted—and *I've* found a cook!"

And when Miss Ferguson came to breakfast, she was looking very pleased, and she said:

"Just fancy! I've found my brooch!"

And when Sarah came to clear away she was looking more pleased still, and she said.

"I'm feeling *that* pleased! My young man's come back."

You see! They'd all found the things they wanted, so Bobbie *must* have brought back the Elephant's Hairs from Fairy-Beast-Land after all!

Only he never saw them again—which is like a lot of other fairy things.

SIX SPLENDID STORIES FOR GIRLS

Here is something to get excited about: the Publishers of LITTLE FOLKS are issuing this month a splendid series of books for girls. Here are the titles of the first six—each at **2/6** net:

CASSELL'S NEW GIRLS' LIBRARY

FEN'S FIRST TERM	Dorothea Moore
THE BRAVEST GIRL IN THE SCHOOL	Ethel Talbot
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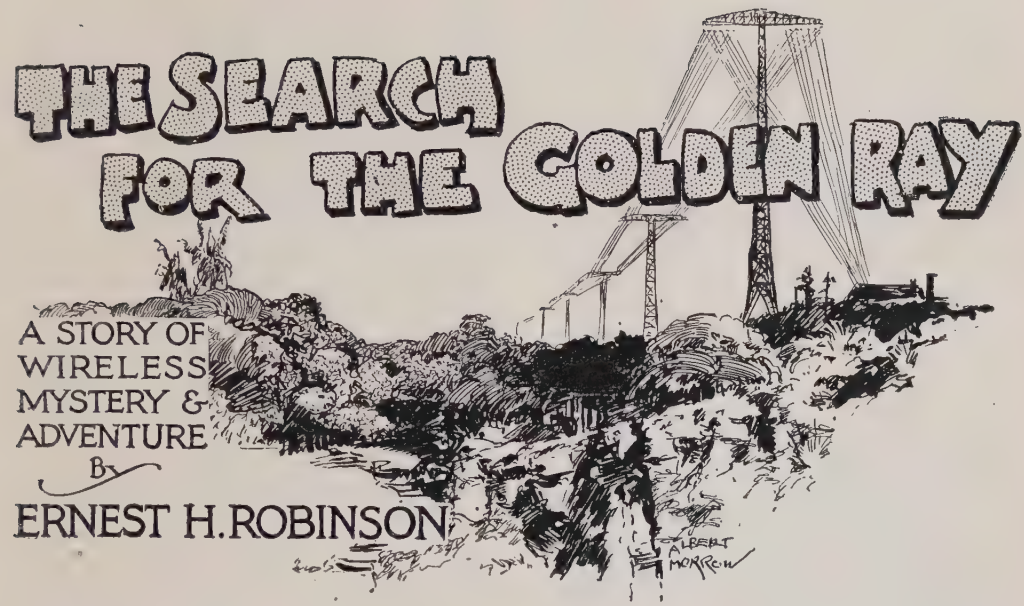
THE PLUCKY PATROL	Nancy M. Hayes
THE GIRLS OF CLANWAYS FARM	May Wynne



CHAPTER IX (*continued*)

Through the Panama Canal

WITHIN the lock and about its sides a dreadful confusion reigned. Everyone seemed to be shouting at once, and all the orders and advice seemed contrary—when it could be understood. The great steamer that had broken free from its mooring ropes under the pressure of the inrushing water was bearing down on the little *Radio*, threatening to grind it into matchwood ere it crashed through the lower gates.

"Quiet, everyone! Keep calm!" cried Captain Trevallen, and rang down for full speed ahead from his engines.

Tom Allen leaped to the mooring ropes and started to hack at them with his knife. Roger and Baptiste rushed to his aid, and one or two of the crew, Grumbles amongst them, also fell to work. In a few seconds the yacht was free.

Their danger was still horrible, though. Even if they escaped the menace of the steamer their chances were extremely small. If the big steamer crashed through the gates they would be swept to destruction by the rushing waters of the canal.

Calm as though he were in harbour, even amidst the indescribable confusion, Captain Trevallen grasped the steering wheel, shouldering the transfixed pilot out of the way, and worked the *Radio* out of the path of the swinging, blundering steamer. It swept down on them with ever increasing velocity. Seconds only would determine whether the yacht would be rolled under and sent to the bottom of the lock.

Captain Trevallen shouted an order and the crew leaped to the sides, grabbing at "fenders" and poles as they went. The yacht felt the power of her racing engines and swung head on to the frothing stream of yellow water. Then the steamer was on them! The two vessels touched momentarily, and the crew of the *Radio* pushed and heaved at the steel sides that threatened them. The *Radio* sheered away, and the huge, ungoverned mass of the steamer slid past them.

For the moment they were safe; but the greater danger was still to be weathered.

"She's started her engines! Thank heaven!" cried Dr. Bastable; and Roger and Joan saw a smother of foam from the stern of the steamer, where the giant propellers were thrashing the stream. She seemed to check in her rush towards the menaced lock gates, and then swung dangerously across, threatening the little *Radio* yet again.

"Look! Look! The Golden Ray has gone again!" yelled Roger, and looking upwards at their aerial and at that of the big steamer so horribly close to them, they saw that he spoke the truth. The Golden Ray was no longer illuminating the wire spans.

Almost at the same moment there came

a cheer from the top gates of the lock. They could see men rushing and someone waving a hat as though he had gone mad with joy. Then the sluices of the huge gates were closed. Almost at once the threatening rush of water stopped. The *Radio* seemed to leap forward, and would have crashed into the steamer that still remained moored to the lock at the forward end, had not Captain Trevallen rung off the engines swiftly. As it was they damaged their bows slightly against the sides of the lock; but that was a very little thing, now that their great danger was over. The big steamer surged forward also; but she had very little way on her and stayed, rolling and quivering in the centre of the lock. For a few moments she looked as though she was alive and shivering at the thought of the horrible fate from which she had so narrowly escaped. Then she slowly moved to the side of the lock, and mooring ropes were thrown out again.

The officials in charge of the lock could only explain that, for some unaccountable reason, the electric engines that controlled the gates had ceased to work, with the result that they could not check the rush of water into the enclosed space of the lock. They had not the slightest idea how and why such an accident had happened.

Dr. Bastable, and those with him on the *Radio*, could easily guess that this was yet another manifestation of the powers of the Golden Ray which it was their duty to track down and abolish. They already knew something of what it could do in the way of causing serious trouble and destruction.

"If only I could find the fellow who is doing this!" cried Dr. Bastable. "He must be found! He must be found quickly. Something very dreadful will happen before long if he continues to transmit these rays."

"We must be very near him now," said Roger. "I have never seen the aerials glow so brightly as they did whilst that trouble was on. What a pity we couldn't measure strength and direction! It might have given us a useful clue."

"We were all too frightened to think of it, Roger," said the scientist. "It would have been a good thing to have done, though." Then, looking very grave and grey-faced, he left the deck of the yacht and climbed up the side of the lock to make his report to the authorities, telling them how he thought the failure of the lock gates had come about.

They remained in the lock for nearly five hours because the officials would not let in the water until they had made a thorough examination of the engines and assured themselves that they were not likely to break down again. They could not altogether believe Dr. Bastable's explanation of the probable cause, and as the Golden Ray had not been observed by any but those on the scientist's yacht, he had no evidence to support his theory.

He returned after about an hour and went to the wireless cabin, where he sent out a full report of the happenings to the General Post Office at home. His transmitter was not sufficiently powerful to reach half across the world, but his message was picked up by a British warship in the Atlantic and relayed on. A reply from the Post Office came direct, and also another from Marconi House in London, where his message had been picked up. A little later on he had another communication from both stations, giving him exact particulars of some other observations of the emission of the Ray, where it had been observed and the damage it had done. Amongst other things it had stopped the revolving of a lighthouse lantern in south-west England. Luckily the stoppage had only been a short one, or very serious consequences to shipping might have resulted.

"It seems almost as though some malevolent person was preparing to declare war on civilization," declared Professor Langley. "I wish I could remain with you and help you in running him to earth, Bastable. I want to get home, though. I must return when we reach the end of the canal."

Eventually the keepers of the great lock were satisfied that their electric engines would work all right, and let the water slowly into the lock again, until it was level with the water above. Then the gates were opened and the two, steamer and yacht, went out into the great lake which occupied the middle of the peninsula.

It was some time before anyone on the *Radio* could think of anything but their merciful deliverance from a dreadful death; but before the voyage through the canal was ended the younger members of the party found hundreds of wonders to marvel at. It was a trip they would remember for the rest of their lives.

When the Pacific end of the canal was

reached Professor Langley said good-bye to his rescuers and caught a boat going to England. He had been told that there was not a passenger vessel likely to be passing through the canal for some time, but, luckily for him, he was able to get a berth on a big boat making a round-the-world trip, and so he went home to the friends who had given him up three long years before.

Dr. Bastable had been able to get some very valuable information from the news transmitted to him from England. The facts and data supplied had enabled him to check all his other observations and lay off a definite course.

"So far as I can see we shall have to pass straight through the Galapagos Islands," he told Roger and Joan. "I wonder if I shall find what I want there. They are very desolate and not often visited."

"That is where the giant tortoises are found, is it not?" queried Roger.

"Joan stepped forward and made a low bow"

"Yes, and many other curious birds and beasts," Dr. Bastable told him. "The islands lie right on the equator, over seven hundred miles from here."

"My word, won't it be hot!" cried Joan, and began to fan herself at the very thought of the scorching they were going to get.

"No, that is one of the odd things about Galapagos," her father told her. "They are swept by a current that comes up from the South Polar regions, and that keeps them much cooler than they would otherwise be, just as the Gulf Stream keeps Great Britain warmer than it would be without it. By the way, the islands take their name from the Spanish word for 'tortoise,' because of those giant fellows you are so anxious to see."

"What an absolutely topping place it sounds!" said Joan, with her eyes shining. "It will be great if you find the man with the Golden Ray on those islands, somewhere or other; but I am glad we are going, anyway. If we don't find the Golden Ray there we shall have to go on even farther, and that will be best of all."

"You little sinner! I believe you would be glad if we had to sail right round the world!" laughed her father. "Wasn't that adventure in the canal enough to satisfy you?"

"That was just horrid," Joan told him. "It is the nice adventures that I want."

And with that sentiment Roger quite agreed.

CHAPTER X

Crossing the Line

THE little *Radio* snored through the long Pacific swell, her bows held straight for the Galapagos Islands that showed like smoke on the horizon. The short tropic night was over, and the Southern Cross and the wheeling planets had been dimmed by the glory of the sun.

Tom Allen, on the bridge, rubbed his eyes and yawned. His watch was nearly over, and soon he would be relieved of his responsible position by Captain Trevallen. Then he grinned as he watched the bustle on the forecastle where the greater part of the crew were busily engaged in what seemed, from their merry, low-voiced laughter, to be some great joke. Tom Allen was in the secret.

So far not one of the passengers had shown up. It was indeed full early for them to make an appearance, seeing that it was barely six in the morning. In twenty minutes Roger would probably appear for his morning sluice from the deck pump, and probably Baptiste and Bob Salters could be expected a little before him, seeing that they both had duties to perform.

Smith, who, from being a mutineer, had turned into one of the most able and willing members of the little crew, came aft to the bridge. He stood on the deck below and touched his forehead to the mate.

"Begging your pardon, sir, but have you got our exact position?" he asked. "'Twouldn't never do to have no mistakes."

"No, we must do everything decently and in order," Tom Allen agreed. "We're there or thereabouts, I think. Half a minute and I will have a look at the chart and figure things out for you."

He turned to the little chart-room and bent over the great map there spread out on a shelf. He took rulers and dividers and measured off their course. Then he consulted the slate log of the night's run and looked at the clock.

"Ten minutes time will be near enough," he said, returning to the open bridge and grinning down at Smith. "As I said, we are there or thereabouts."

"Then would you be so kind as to get the young lady and gentleman to come out?" Smith requested. "There's only them, young Bob and the Frenchy, and Jack King from the engine-room as is anyways lawful for us to touch. The owner ain't legible, is he?"

Tom Allen looked puzzled, and then laughed as he realized that the man meant "eligible."

"No, the owner is exempt," he said. "All right; but I must leave everything to you. Fetch out Bob and Baptiste and make them bring the other two youngsters along. Don't be rough with the young lady, Smith."

"Wouldn't harm a hair of her head, sir," said Smith fervently. "But she'll have to go through it, same as the others. Can't 'ave no shirking, sir. But she's a proper young sport, is Miss Joan, and she wouldn't like to be left out, I reckon."

It was not another mutiny or anything like that which was being matured on the decks of the *Radio*. It was only that the men had determined to observe the time-honoured ceremonial of "Crossing the Line," and now the yacht was practically on the Equator. All those passengers and members of the crew who had not previously been introduced to Father Neptune were now going to make his acquaintance.

A small bath of canvas had been rigged on the deck and filled to the brim with water. Against it was a rough stool. That was all that was visible of the preparations, on which the men had been engaged for many hours, ever since they had obtained Captain Trevallen's permission for their fun.

Bob and Baptiste were roused out and told that they were to fetch Miss Joan and Master Roger—to see the Galapagos Islands. At the same time Captain Trevallen made his appearance, quickly followed by Dr. Bastable, who was in the secret. He went up on to the bridge along with the skipper.

Roger, who had only just risen, was in his pyjamas, with a bath robe thrown over them. He looked very sleepy and a little bewildered at having been called from his berth so suddenly.

"Well, what's there wonderful to see?" he asked. "If that's the islands, I don't think much of them. They'll be a lot nearer in a few hours' time. I'm going back to bed. Hallo, Joan, what on earth have you got yourself up like that for? Surely you're not going swimming?"

Joan had on a bathing costume under a mackintosh coat. Her eyes were alight with fun as she looked at her cousin.

"Oh, Roger, you innocent," she laughed. "Don't you know what you're here for?"

Roger shook his head and stared round him. He had not the slightest idea.

"You'll know soon enough!" cried Joan. "Oh, here he comes!"

There was a forceful roar that seemed to come from out of the sea at the bows of the yacht.

"*Radio*, ahoy!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" called Captain Trevallen, from the bridge. "Will it please Your Majesty to come on board?"

At that there was another roar and a great form, followed by two others, clambered over the bows. Three of the crew, representing Father Neptune, his wife and an attendant, had been hiding in rope slings just out of sight over the bows.

Father Neptune came with stately stride along the deck and paused beneath the bridge.

"I bid the yacht *Radio* and all on board

her welcome to my dominions," he said. "I hope her voyage will be prosperous, and that the owner will find out that there mystery he's so set on."

"Handsomely spoken, Your Majesty," said the Captain, entering whole-heartedly into the fun. "I am sure that we are all glad to see you and to welcome you as we cross the Line. The owner will thank you on his own behalf."

"Very many thanks indeed, Father Neptune," said Dr. Bastable, his eyes twinkling. "I am sure you have never come on board a happier ship than the *Radio*. She has a first-class crew, and if we bring our voyage to a satisfactory conclusion it will be owing to their loyal help. I am just about to invite the crew to an extra special breakfast to celebrate Crossing the Line, and I hope that Your Majesty, your Queen and Court, will join us."

This was quite unexpected, and for a moment Father Neptune was nonplussed. Then he snatched his gilt paper crown from his head and waved it high in the air.

"Three cheers, boys!" he called. "Three cheers for the best owner and the best little craft that ever sailed the seas! Hip! Hip! Hip! Hooray!"

The Queen, the attendant, and the crew joined in with a will, and then Father Neptune got to business.

"I've heard tell that there's some on this happy little craft that has never crossed my Line afore," he said. "Will you be so good as to be so kind as to produce these self-same younkers, so as they can be introduced to me proper."

Captain Trevallen waved his hand towards the four youngsters and the engineer, Jack King, who were standing by the rail wondering what was going to happen next.

Joan stepped forward at once and made a low bow.

"Pleased to meet you, my dear," said Father Neptune. "A nice, bonny lass, if ever I seed one. But you ain't washed your pretty face this morning, my dear. Must have your face washed before you can be introduced, proper, to Father Neptune."

He made a sign and Joan had just time to slip out of her mackintosh before the Queen took her by the arm and tipped her neatly into the bath. Joan made a huge splashing and succeeded in drenching the Queen, greatly to the delight of everybody, including Father Neptune himself, who roared heartily at the discomfiture of his good lady, who had not expected a wetting so early in the proceedings.

Joan slipped out of the bath and wrapped herself in her coat again, feeling mightily refreshed by the dip.

The boys did not get off so lightly, and King, the engineer, was served just like them.

"Nasty, dirty-looking lot o' wasters!" declared His Majesty. "What do you mean, you ruffians, coming into my domains without a shave? You'll have to be shaved and washed, every man of you, afore I'll speak to you. Get to work, minion!"

The "minion," otherwise the sole member of Neptune's Court, got to work with a will. Assisted by the Queen he seized Roger first and sat him on the form. A huge pail of soapsuds was produced and a giant wooden imitation razor. Roger's face was liberally lathered, and when he spluttered the brush was popped into his mouth. Then, just as he was beginning to feel the least bit annoyed by the horse-play, he was tipped backwards into the bath and left to struggle there.

Baptiste was the next victim.

"But, me, I have no whispers—how you call him—beards and things, for to be shave!" he cried.

Thereupon Father Neptune examined his face and declared that he spoke the truth.

"Give him a double shave to make his beard grow!" he ordained, and so Baptiste had a double lot of lather and an extra long scraping with the giant razor. Then he, too, was suddenly tipped into the bath, where Roger, who had been waiting for him, seized him and gave him a jolly good ducking.

Bob Salters was a bit scared by these proceedings and tried to escape. He might as well have tried to grow wings. The whole crew chased him and caught him. He, too, got a double dose; and both Roger and Baptiste were waiting for him at the bath, and so he got a double ducking as well. But he had got over his scare by the time he arrived in the water, so that the other two got almost as good as they gave.

John King was let off fairly lightly; but he had to go through the whole ceremony. Then Father Neptune declared them all full-blooded sailor men, and the whole laughing crowd engaged in a romp on the deck until Father Neptune and his Queen and attendant had had their wigs

and crowns snatched from them and they, too, had been ducked. Then everybody went to their quarters to get into dry clothes, and after that the special breakfast was served.

It was a gorgeous affair and the men enjoyed every mouthful. They were well fed in any case, but Dr. Bastable had provided all kinds of dainties, and they enjoyed themselves like a lot of schoolboys.

Unfortunately, the feast did not end so merrily as it had begun. The makeshift table was just being cleared away so that some of the crew could give an exhibition of sailor dancing, when there was a sudden grinding, cracking sound from the engine-room.

King leaped to the engine room hatch like a shot, and the rest stood staring at one another with scared faces as the *Radio* shivered and slid forward with silent engines.

"Again! It has caught us yet again!" cried Dr. Bastable, and then every soul on the deck became aware that the whole of the metal work of the yacht was shining with a golden light. It was but faint, because of the strong sun; but it was visible, particularly in the shadows. The *Radio* had sailed directly into the path of the Golden Ray. The Ray had stopped her engines, just as it had stopped other engines. Before, for some reason, it had not affected them; but this time the yacht had caught the full effect of its rays.

King came up quickly with a report.

"Port engine big-end and connecting rod have gone, broken," he told the skipper. "Repairs may be possible, seeing that we carry spares; but they will take a long time. It is a bad smash, sir. The ignition magneto suddenly seized up and some part of the gear jambed at the same time. Even if we can mend it, we shall want at least a week to make repairs."

"Good thing it is no worse," said Dr. Bastable and departed hurriedly to the wireless room to measure the force and direction of the Ray.

"It is the strongest I have ever measured it," he said, when he came from the cabin about a quarter of an hour later. "It has gone now, but I was able to find out all I wanted. I have taken the direction and the line crosses one of these small islands. I am certain now that we are near the end of our search. I am wondering whether the miscreant saw us and directed his Ray full on us in order to wreck us if he could."

"But how could he know that we were after him?" queried Roger.

"We have been wirelessing news and talking about our search almost the whole of our voyage," said Dr. Bastable. "If the fellow is an accomplished wireless investigator, with powerful instruments, he will have been expecting us. He would recognize us without difficulty, I expect, through a big telescope. That small island over there is the one on which I expect to find our enemy."

"Suppose he tries to put up a fight?" suggested Tom Allen, looking round at the youngsters. "We're in no shape to resist an attack, sir. Have you thought of that?"

"Yes, and that is what makes me worried by the thought that our engines have gone wrong," said the scientist. "Of course, fighting is out of the question. I would not dream of it, unless he attacked us first. If we had our power I should have gone to one of the big islands and put the youngsters on shore, and then carried out my investigations. As it is——"

"As it is you will have to take us with you, dad," Joan broke in. "And I'm jolly glad. After coming all this way in search of the Golden Ray, Roger and I don't want to be left out of the last scene. Why—why it would be like coming out of a picture-show with one reel of a big drama yet to go. It couldn't be done, dad. You know it couldn't."

"Suppose this fellow didn't really mean to damage the *Radio*, but only did it accidentally in the course of his experiments," suggested Roger. "If that is so he would hardly try to fight us if we set our sails and wandered up to his island casually, so to speak. You could have a look round then, uncle, and make up your mind about things. If he looked a nasty customer we could easily sail away to one or other of the islands, and then you could wireless for help."

"That sounds like a good idea, Roger," said Dr. Bastable thoughtfully. "Yes, it is a very good idea indeed. We will do it, my boy." Then he turned to Captain Trevallen. "How about our sails—are they capable of moving us in this light breeze?"

"Yes, we shall make some way," was the skipper's answer. "We shall not go fast; but we ought to be at the island in the course of the afternoon if the breeze doesn't drop."

"Then please have the sails rigged and

let us get under way as soon as we can," the owner requested. "And pass the word to the engine-room staff to get ahead with their repairs. The sooner we can use our power again the better I shall be pleased. They can call for any help they want; all of us will be only too willing to lend a hand if it is required."

All was bustle and vigorous work on the *Radio* from that moment onward. The engine-room staff professed their ability to get along with their difficult task without calling on the deck for help, so that all the other hands were available to rig the sails, which was done in double-quick time. Then the *Radio* surged slowly forward towards the island which Dr. Bastable had indicated as the probable source of the troublesome Golden Ray.

CHAPTER XI

The Golden Ray at Last

"LOOKS to me remarkably like a desert island," said Roger, as he and Joan, with Bob and Baptiste, crowded in the bows of the yacht and stared at the little island they were slowly approaching.

They were only about a quarter of a mile off the sandy shore of a tiny bay towards which they were heading. There was not a sign of human life to be seen. The island seemed to be rather dry and arid, and the vegetation was low and scrubby. In the centre was a hill about seven or eight hundred feet high, and this looked distinctly greener than the coastal line.

"Not much rain falls on the coast," said Roger in explanation, having read this in a book on the islands. "There is a good deal on the hills, though. Most of the people live a bit away from the coast, I think. But there are not many people at all, I believe. Just some turtle hunters and a few who work plantations."

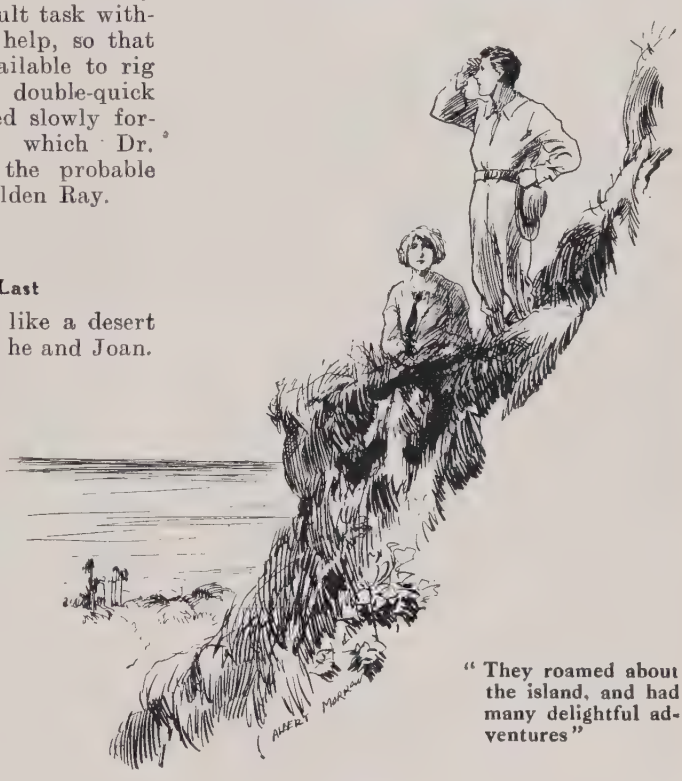
"Look! Look!" cried Joan, pointing down into the water. "There is one of the giant tortoises. Oh, what a monster! I didn't know they could swim."

"That's not a tortoise, silly, it's a turtle," said Roger, very superior because of his recently acquired knowledge. "Very big ones come ashore here to lay their eggs."

"Well, a tortoise and a turtle are the same thing, aren't they?" said Joan. "You needn't pretend that you know everything, just because you've been reading that book. It is a tortoise, isn't it, Baptiste?"

"Not know," said the French boy. "But turtle him swim with flipper—zat right, hey? Tortoise, him walk with feet."

"Quite right, Baptiste, and that is a turtle," said Roger. "But there is a tortoise, right enough. My hat, what a whopper! And there are two smaller ones just waddling out of the undergrowth."



"They roamed about the island, and had many delightful adventures"

The youngsters looked excitedly towards the shore, gazing at the enormous tortoises, one of which looked to be as big as a smallish kitchen table. Roger and Joan had both seen examples of these strange creatures in the London Zoo; but they were entirely new to both Bob and Baptiste. The French boy, who had seen small garden tortoises before, was very excited; but to Bob, who had never seen anything like it before, it didn't seem any more wonderful than a hundred other things he had seen during his voyage.

"Some of them live to be hundreds of years old," said Joan in an awestruck voice. "They are the longest-living creatures on this earth, I believe. Just fancy, if that big fellow was alive when Napoleon was kicking up a fuss in Europe."

"It would be more wonderful still if he was alive in the time of William the Conqueror, 1066," said Roger, with a laugh. "Don't be absurd, Joan. How are we ever to know how old they are? Hallo, we are going to anchor. Hurrah! Here we are, at the end of our voyage at last!"

"Don't be absurd, Roger," said Joan, getting her own back. "How do you know that we are at the end of our voyage?"

At that Roger chased her round the deck, and the romp did not end until Captain Trevallen bade the youngsters be quiet.

A boat was lowered and Dr. Bastable stepped into it, together with Tom Allen and four of the crew. He was deaf to the entreaties of the youngsters.

"If all looks well and we discover no sign of any enemy you shall have a run on shore, all four of you," he told them as the boat pushed away from the side of the yacht. "Meanwhile you will stay there until I come back. I am not going to have you running into any unnecessary danger."

They had to make the best of that and possess their souls in patience. In the end, though, they were glad that they had stayed, for they were soon to have a most exciting adventure.

Having nothing better to do, they got out the fishing lines and were soon littering the deck at the stern of the yacht with all kinds of curious sea creatures, when the look-out suddenly gave tongue and informed the yacht that there was a man on the beach who was signalling to them. They looked up, and it did not take them long to discover that the man, whoever he was, knew the Morse code and was using it, wagging dots and dashes with his arm.

"He's a pretty expert operator, by the look of him," said Jimmy Sparks, who had joined in the fun on deck, though, strictly speaking, he should have been on watch in the wireless cabin. "Wants to know if we will send a boat for him. Why doesn't he get the watchman in our boat to pull him out, if he wants to come?"

"He can't see our boat," said Joan. "It must be hidden from him by that big rock. And the watchman can't see him either."

Jimmy Sparks reported the matter to the skipper, who was in his cabin, and orders were given for a boat to pull to the shore to inquire what the stranger wanted.

The youngsters would dearly have liked to have gone with it; but they were under orders, and so they had to wait until it returned, bringing the man with it.

He turned out to be a long, thin, youngish man, clad in very rough clothes.

"Well, I just guess this beats Banager!" he said, with a strong nasal accent as he climbed on board, and they knew, at once, that he was an American. "I guess I'm real glad to welcome you to my island. Yes, it's my island. I rent it from the Ecuador Government. It's a dandy little spot. And who's the bright spark who read my message so quick?" He glanced round him with quick, appraising eyes and instantly spotted the wireless aerial.

"Say, you've got a radio aboard! Better and better," he cried. "I'm just real sick for a heart-to-heart talk with a real radio fan. Trot him out."

"The only fans we have——" began Joan, but Roger gave her a nudge that shut her up sharply.

"'Fan' is American for enthusiast," he whispered, and would have dragged Jimmy Sparks forward to introduce him had not Captain Trevallen come on deck to interview the stranger. He took him to his cabin.

"I bet that's our Golden Ray man!" cried Roger. "And uncle has missed him. Oh, what a lark!"

"Well, if he is, I'm quite sure that he isn't sending out the Ray for any bad purpose," said Joan. "He has a kind face. He wouldn't do anything mean or unkind, I am sure of that."

And in the end it turned out to be just as Roger and Joan had guessed. When Dr. Bastable returned, to tell them that they had found a small house on the island, but that it was locked up and they couldn't get in to make investigations, the youngsters said not a word about the stranger who was, even then, with the skipper in his cabin.

Dr. Bastable went on to tell them that there were four aerials leading to the house and that he was perfectly sure that the owner of that house must be the man he was looking for. Then Joan whispered to Baptiste and sent him to fetch the captain and the stranger.

It is difficult to tell who was the more

astonished at that meeting—Dr. Bastable, who recognized, at once, Hiram Q. Peachley, a very well known American radio engineer, whom he had met during the Great War; or Peachley when he heard that he had been transmitting a ray that had been troubling the world.

"Waal, shake my whiskers," he ejaculated. "I caught on to a piece of radio about a Golden Ray, but I never guessed that it was referring to me. My word, I'll just have to stop it at once. It has come out of a special transmitter I have invented, Dr. Bastable. You must come right up and let me show it to you. Just the greatest little transmitter that ever was invented. Carry it in your pocket, almost, and shoot your messages in any direction you like. Transmits a narrow beam, like a lighthouse. But this Golden Ray business troubles me. If they find out what I am doing I'll have all the war-mongers in the world after me, wanting it to kill and wreck and maim with. I'm all for peace, and it sure does knock me endwise to think that I've made an invention like that. You must help me get rid of it, doctor."

And that is very nearly the end of our story of the search for the Golden Ray. The *Radio* stayed at the island for over a month whilst her engines were being repaired, and during that time Dr. Bastable succeeded in helping Hiram Peachley to get rid of the dangerous Golden Ray. They solemnly promised to keep their secret of how it had been transmitted so that it should not get into the hands of those who would use it wrongly. But the little transmitter was developed into a fine instrument that would assist civilization by making communication between man and man and nation and nation even easier than it was already.

Meanwhile the youngsters roamed about the island and saw all sorts of wonders, and had many delightful adventures amongst the queer animals of the island. They rode on the backs of giant tortoises and collected the strange wild flowers of that part of the world, and succeeded in having a most enjoyable time.

When the time came for them to go, Hiram Peachley asked to come with them and bring his completed transmitter with him, so that he could patent it and put it on the market.

"Come, by all means," said Dr. Bastable; and Joan and Roger, with whom the quaint American was a great favourite, echoed the welcome.

"Wireless is likely to be one of the greatest forces making for peace in the history of the world," the scientist continued. "I came on more or less of a fool's errand, for I expected to find an enemy to mankind. Instead, I found a friend. Yours is a great invention, Peachley, and if for nothing else I am glad that my meeting with you was the end of my search for the Golden Ray."

THE END

Look out for

UNDER THE WHITE COCKADE

A Grand New Historical Story

By

D. H. PARRY

which will start in my next Number (published October 25) and run through the Volume

Gulliver's Voyage to Lilliput

By Jonathan Swift

I WAS bred as a surgeon and also learned navigation, and other parts of the mathematics, useful to those who intend to travel. I made several voyages as ship's surgeon in my youth, and after marrying Mary Burton, second daughter to Mr. Edward Burton, hosier, of Newgate Street, I presently accepted an advantageous offer from Captain William Prichard, master of the *Antelope*, who was making a voyage to the South Seas.

We set sail from Bristol, May 4th, 1699, and our voyage at first was very prosperous.

It would not be proper, for some reasons, to trouble the reader with the particulars of our adventures in those seas; let it suffice to inform him that in our passage from thence to the East Indies, we were driven by a violent storm to the north-west of Van Dieman's Land. By an observation, we found ourselves in the latitude of 30 degrees 2 minutes south. Twelve of our crew were dead by immoderate labour and ill food; the rest were in a very weak condition.

On the 5th of November, which was the beginning of summer in those parts, the weather being very hazy, the seaman spied a rock within half a cable's length of the ship; but the wind was so strong that we were driven directly upon it, and split. Six of the crew, of whom I was one, having let down the boat into the sea, made a shift to get clear of the ship and the rock. We rowed, by my computation, about three leagues, till we were able to work no longer, being already spent with labour while we were in the ship. We therefore trusted ourselves to the mercy of the waves, and in about half an hour the boat was overset by a sudden flurry from the north.

What became of my companions in the boat, as well as those who escaped on the rock, or were left in the vessel, I cannot tell; but conclude they were all lost. For my own part, I swam as fortune directed me, and was pushed forward by the wind and tide. I often let my legs drop, and could feel no bottom; but when I was almost gone, and able to struggle no longer, I found myself within my depth; and by this time the storm was much abated. The declivity was so small, that I walked near a mile before I got to the shore, which I conjectured was about eight o'clock in the evening.

I then advanced forward near half a mile, but could not discover any sign of houses or inhabitants; at least, I was in so weak a condition that I did not observe them. I was extremely tired, so lay down on the grass, where I slept sounder than I ever remembered to have done in my life, about nine hours; for when I awaked it was just daylight.

I attempted to rise but was not able to stir; for as I happened to lie on my back, I found my arms and legs were strongly fastened on each side to the ground; and my hair, which was long and thick, tied down in the same manner. I likewise felt several slender cords across my body, from my armpits to my thighs. I heard a confused noise about me but was able to see nothing but the sky.

In a little time I felt something alive moving on my left leg, which advanced gently forward almost up to my chin; when, bending my eyes downward as much as I could, I perceived it to be a human creature not six inches high, with a bow and an arrow in his hand. I felt at least forty more following the first.

I was in the utmost astonishment, and roared so loud, that they all ran back in a fright; and some of them, as I was afterwards told, were hurt with the falls they got by leaping from my sides upon the ground. I heard them crying out words, but I then knew not what they meant.

I lay all this while in great uneasiness; at length, struggling to get loose, I broke the strings and wrenched out the pegs that fastened my left arm to the ground; at the same time, with a violent pull, which gave me excessive pain, I a little loosened the strings that tied down my hair on the left side, so that I was just able to turn my head about two inches.

But the creatures ran off a second time, before I could seize them; and in an instant I felt above a hundred arrows discharged on my left hand, which pricked me like so many needles; and another flight fell on my body (though I felt them not) and some on my face.

Groaning with grief and pain, I thought it the most prudent method to lie still and wait until night to free myself further and escape.

A NEW WAY OF FEEDING

But fortune disposed otherwise of me. The people, seeing me quiet, discharged no more arrows; but about four yards from me, over against my right ear, I heard a knocking like that of people at work; when, turning my head that way as well as I could, I saw a stage erected about a foot and a half from the ground, capable of holding four of the inhabitants, with ladders to mount it; from whence one of them made me a long speech, whereof I understood not one syllable. I answered in a few words in the most submissive manner; and being almost famished with hunger, having not eaten a morsel for some hours before I left the ship, I made signs to him that I wanted food.

He understood me very well. He descended and commanded that several ladders should be applied to my sides, on which above a hundred of the inhabitants mounted, and walked towards my mouth, laden with baskets full of meat, which had been provided and sent thither by the king's orders, upon the first intelligence he received of me. I observed there was the flesh of several animals, but I could not distinguish them by taste. There were shoulders, legs, and loins, shaped like those of mutton, and very well dressed, but smaller than the wings of a lark. I ate them by two or three at a mouthful, and took three loaves at a time, about the bigness of musket bullets.

They supplied me as fast as they could, showing a thousand marks of wonder and astonishment at my bulk and appetite. I then made another sign, that I wanted drink. They found by my eating that a small quantity would not suffice me; and being a most ingenious people, they slung up, with great dexterity, one of their largest hogsheads, then rolled it towards my hand, and beat out the top; I drank it off at a draught, which I might well do, for it did not hold half a pint, and tasted like a small wine of Burgundy, but much more delicious.

After some time there appeared before me a person of high rank from his imperial majesty. He advanced forwards up to my face, and spoke about ten minutes; often pointing forwards, which, as I afterwards found, was towards the capital city, about half a mile distant; whither it was agreed by his majesty in council that I must be conveyed, and as a prisoner. He made other signs to let me understand that I should have meat and drink and good treatment.

Soon after he withdrew I heard a general shout, and I felt great numbers of people on my left side relaxing the cords to such a degree that I was able to turn upon my right side. But before this, they had daubed my face and both my hands with a sort of ointment, very pleasant to the smell, which, in a few minutes, removed all the smart of their arrows.

These circumstances, added to the refreshment I had received by their victuals and drink, which were very nourishing, disposed me to sleep. I slept about eight hours, as I was afterwards assured; and it was no wonder, for the physicians, by the emperor's order, had mingled a sleepy potion in the hogshead of wine.

It seems that upon the first moment I was discovered sleeping on the ground, after my landing, the emperor had early notice of it by an express; and determined, in council, that I should be tied in the manner I have related (which was done in the night while I slept); that plenty of meat and drink should be sent me, and a machine prepared to carry me to the capital city.

Five hundred carpenters and engineers were immediately set at work to prepare the greatest engine they had. It was a frame of wood, raised three inches from the ground, about seven feet long, and four wide, moving upon twenty-two wheels.

But the principal difficulty was to raise and place me in this vehicle. Eighty poles, each of one foot high, were erected for this purpose, and very strong cords, of the bigness of packthread, were fastened by hooks to many bandages, which the workmen had girt round my neck, my hands, my body, and my legs. Nine hundred of the strongest men were employed to draw up these cords, by many pulleys fastened on the poles; and thus, in less than three hours, I was raised and slung into the engine, and there tied fast.

All this I was told; for, while the operation was performing, I lay in a profound sleep. Fifteen hundred of the emperor's largest horses, each about four inches and a half high, were employed to draw me towards the metropolis, which, as I said, was half a mile distant.

We made a long march the remaining part of the day, and rested at night, with five hundred guards on each side of me, half with torches, and half with bows and arrows, ready to shoot me if I should offer to stir. The next morning, at sunrise, we continued our march, and arrived within two hundred yards of the city gates about noon.

At the place where the carriage stopped there stood an ancient temple, the largest in the whole kingdom, which was no longer used for worship, and had all its ornaments and furniture carried away. In this edifice it was determined I should lodge.

The great gate of the temple was about four feet high and almost two feet wide, through which I could easily creep. When I was within, fourscore and eleven chains, like those that hang to a lady's watch in Europe, and almost as large, were locked to my left leg with six-and-thirty padlocks. When the workmen found it was impossible for me to break loose, they cut all the strings that bound me; whereupon I rose up, feeling very melancholy. But the noise and astonishment of the people, at seeing me rise and walk, are not to be expressed. The chain that held my left leg was about two yards long, and gave me not only the liberty of walking backwards and forwards in a semicircle, but, being fixed within four inches of the gate, allowed me to creep in, and lie at my full length in the temple.

GULLIVER IN THE CITY

When I found myself on my feet, I looked about me, and must confess I never beheld a more entertaining prospect. The country around appeared like a continued garden, and the enclosed fields, which were generally forty feet square, resembled so many beds of flowers. These fields were intermingled with woods, and the tallest trees, as I could judge, appeared to be seven feet high. I viewed the town on my left hand, which looked like the painted scenes of a city in a theatre.

I soon came out of my house, having occasion for fresh air. The emperor advanced on horseback towards me and surveyed me round with

great admiration; but kept beyond the length of my chain. He ordered his cooks and butlers, who were already prepared, to give me victuals and drink, which they pushed forward in a sort of vehicle upon wheels, till I could reach them. I took these vehicles, and soon emptied them all; twenty of them were filled with meat, and ten with liquor; each of the former afforded me two or three good mouthfuls; and I emptied the liquor of ten vessels, which was contained in earthen vials, into one vehicle, drinking it off at a draught; and so I did with the rest.

After about two hours the court retired, and I was left with a strong guard, to prevent the impertinence of the rabble, who were very impatient to crowd about me as near as they durst; and six of them had the impudence to shoot their arrows at me, whereof one very narrowly missed my left eye. To punish these miscreants the guards seized and bound them and delivered them to me. I took them all in my right hand, put five of them into my coat-pocket, and as to the sixth, I made a countenance as if I would eat him alive. The poor man squalled terribly, and the colonel and his officers were in much pain, especially when they saw me take out my penknife: but I soon put them out of fear; for, looking mildly, and immediately cutting the string he was bound with, I sat him gently on the ground, and away he ran. I treated the rest in the same manner, taking them one by one out of my pocket; and I observed both the soldiers and the people were delighted at this mark of my clemency, which was represented to my advantage at court.

Towards night I got with some difficulty into my house, where I lay on the ground, and continued to do so about a fortnight; during which time the emperor gave orders to have a bed prepared for me. Six hundred beds of the common measure were brought in carriages, and worked up in my house; a hundred and fifty of their beds, sewn together, made up the breadth and length; and these were four double; which, however, kept me but very indifferently from the hardness of the floor, that was of smooth stone. By the same computation, they provided me with sheets, blankets, and coverlets.

In the meantime the emperor held frequent councils, to debate what course should be taken with me. In the midst of these consultations, several officers of the army arrived and gave an account of my behaviour to the six miscreants above mentioned; which made so favourable an impression on his majesty that an order was issued obliging all the villagers nine hundred yards round the city to deliver in every morning six beeves, forty sheep and other victuals, for my sustenance together with a proportionable quantity of bread and wine and other liquors.

An establishment was also made of six hundred persons to be my domestics, who had tents built for them, very conveniently, on each side of my door. It was likewise ordered that three hundred tailors should make me a suit of clothes, after the fashion of the country; and that six of his majesty's greatest scholars should be employed to instruct me in their language. All these orders were duly put in execution; and in about three weeks I made a great progress in learning to speak to them.

IN GULLIVER'S POCKETS

The emperor now said that by the laws of his kingdom I must be searched by two of his officers; for probably I might carry about me several weapons, which must needs be dangerous things, if they answered the bulk of so prodigious a person. He knew this could not be done without my consent and assistance; and he had so good an opinion of my generosity and justice as to thrust their persons in my hands.

I took up the two officers gently, put them first into my coat pockets and then into every other pocket about me, except my two fobs and another secret pocket, which I had no mind should be searched. In one of my fobs there was a silver watch, and in the other a small quantity of gold in a purse. These gentlemen, having pens, ink and paper, about them, made an exact inventory of all they saw, and indeed I hardly knew my possessions from the manner in which they described them.

For my handkerchief they wrote: "In the right coat pocket of the great man-mountain we found only one great piece of coarse cloth, large enough to be a foot cloth for your majesty's chief room of state"; and for my snuff box "a huge silver chest, with a cover of the same material, which we were not able to lift. We desired it should be opened, and one of us stepping into it, found himself up to the mid-leg in a sort of dust, some part whereof flying up to our faces, set us both a-sneezing for several times together."

When this inventory was read over to the emperor, he wished to see the objects therein described. First he demanded one of the hollow iron pillars, by which he meant my pocket pistols. I first cautioned the emperor not to be afraid, and then I let it off in the air. The astonishment was very great. Hundreds fell down as if they had been struck dead; and even the emperor, although he stood his ground, could not recover himself for some time.

GULLIVER SET FREE

My gentleness and good behaviour had gained so far on the emperor and his court, and indeed upon the army and people in general, that I began to conceive hopes of getting my liberty in a short time. I took all possible methods to cultivate this favourable disposition. The natives came, by degrees, to be less apprehensive of any danger from me; I would sometimes lie down, and let five or six of them dance on my head; and at last the boys and girls would venture to come and play at hide and seek in my hair.

The horses of the army, which at first would shy at the man-mountain, as the people of Lilliput called me, having been daily led and exercised before me, were no longer alarmed

but would come up to my very feet without starting. The riders would leap them over my hand as I held it on the ground; and one of the emperor's huntsmen, upon a large courser, took my foot, shoe and all; which was indeed a prodigious leap.

I had the good fortune to divert the emperor one day after a very extraordinary manner. I desired he would order several sticks of two feet high, and the thickness of an ordinary cane, to be brought me; and the next morning six woodmen arrived with as many carriages drawn by eight horses to each. I took nine of these sticks, and fixing them firmly in the ground in a quadrangular figure, two feet and a half square, I took four other sticks, and tied them parallel at each corner about two feet from the ground; then I fastened my handkerchief to the nine sticks that stood erect, and extended it on all sides, till it was tight as the top of a drum; and the four parallel sticks, rising about five inches higher than the handkerchief, served as ledges on each side.

When I had finished my work I desired the emperor to let a troop of his best horses, twenty-four in number, come and exercise upon this plain. His majesty approved of the proposal, and I took them up, one by one, in my hands, ready mounted and armed with the proper officers to exercise them. As soon as they got into order, they divided into two parties, performed mock skirmishes, discharged blunt arrows, drew their swords, fled and pursued, attacked and retired, and, in short, discovered the best military discipline I ever beheld. The parallel sticks secured them and their horses from falling over the stage; and the emperor was so much delighted that he ordered this entertainment to be repeated several days, and once was pleased to be lifted up, and give the word of command.

It was my good fortune that no ill accident happened in these entertainments; only once, a fiery horse that belonged to one of the captains, pawing with his hoof, struck a hole in my handkerchief, and his foot slipping, he overthrew his rider and himself; but I immediately relieved them both, and covering the hole with one hand I set down the troop with the other, in the same manner as I took them up. The horse that fell was strained in the left shoulder, but the rider got no hurt; and I repaired my handkerchief as well as I could; however, I would not trust the strength of it any more in such dangerous enterprises.

Two days after this adventure, the emperor, having ordered that part of his army which quarters in and about his metropolis to be in readiness, took a fancy of diverting himself in a very singular manner. He desired I would stand like a Colossus, with my legs as far asunder as I conveniently could. He then commanded his general (who was an old experienced leader and a great patron of mine) to draw up the troops in close order, and march them under me; the foot by twenty-four abreast, and the horse by sixteen, with drums beating, colours flying, and pikes advanced. This body consisted of three thousand foot, and a thousand horse.

I had sent so many memorials and petitions for my liberty that his majesty at length mentioned the matter, first in the cabinet and then in a full council, where it was opposed by none, except Skyresh Bolgolam, the admiral of the realm, who was pleased, without any provocation, to be my mortal enemy. However, he did not prevail, except to draw up the conditions on which I should regain my liberty, such as these:

I. The man-mountain shall not depart from our dominions without our licence under our great seal.

II. He shall not presume to come into our metropolis without our express order, at which time the inhabitants shall have two hours' warning to keep within doors.

III. As he walks the roads he shall take the utmost care not to trample upon the bodies of any of our loving subjects, their horses or carriages, nor take any of our subjects into his hands, without their own consent.

IV. He shall be our ally against our enemies in the island of Blefuscu, and do his utmost to destroy their fleet, which is now preparing to invade us.

I swore and subscribed to these articles in great cheerfulness and content. In return I was granted my liberty, and a daily allowance of meat and drink sufficient for 1728 Lilliputians, which the emperor computed would be correct for my needs.

GULLIVER PERFORMS STRANGE FEATS

The first request I made, after I had obtained my liberty, was that I might have licence to see Mildendo, the metropolis; which the emperor easily granted me, but with a special charge to do no hurt either to the inhabitants or their houses. The people had notice, by proclamation, of my design to visit the town. The wall which encompassed it is two feet and a half high, and at least eleven inches broad, so that a coach and horses may be driven very safely round it; and it is flanked with strong towers at ten feet distance.

I stepped over the great western gate, and passed very gently and sideling through the two principal streets only in my short waistcoat, for fear of damaging the roofs and eaves of the houses with the skirts of my coat. I walked with the utmost circumspection, to avoid treading on any stragglers who might remain in the streets; although the orders were very strict, that all people should keep in their houses, at their own peril. The garret windows and tops of houses were so crowded with spectators that I thought in all my travels I had not seen a more populous place.

The city is an exact square, each side of the wall being five hundred feet long. The two great streets, which run across and divide it into

four quarters, are five feet wide. The lanes and alleys, which I could not enter, but only viewed them as I passed, are from twelve to eighteen inches. The town is capable of holding five hundred thousand souls; the houses are from three to five storeys; the shops and markets well provided.

The emperor's palace is in the centre of the city, where the two great streets meet. It is enclosed by a wall of two feet high, and twenty feet distant from the building. I had his majesty's permission to step over this wall; and the space being so wide between that and the palace, I could easily view it on every side. The outward court is a square of forty feet, and includes two other courts: in the inmost are the royal apartments, which I was very desirous to see, but found it extremely difficult; for the great gates, from one square into another, were but eighteen inches high and seven inches wide.

Now the buildings of the outer court were at least five feet high, and it was impossible for me to stride over them without infinite damage to the pile, though the walls were strongly built of hewn stone, and four inches thick. At the same time, the emperor had a great desire that I should see the magnificence of his palace; but this I was not able to do till three days after, which I spent in cutting down, with my knife, some of the largest trees in the royal park, about a hundred yards' distance from the city. Of these trees I made two stools, each about three feet high, and strong enough to bear my weight.

The people having received notice a second time, I went again through the city to the palace, with my two stools in my hands. When I came to the side of the outer court I stood upon one stool, and took the other in my hand; this I lifted over the roof, and gently set it down on the space between the first and second court, which was eight feet wide. I then stepped over the building very conveniently from one stool to the other, and drew up the first after me with a hooked stick.

By this contrivance I got into the inner court; and lying down upon my side, I applied my face to the windows of the middle storeys, which were left open on purpose, and discovered the most splendid apartments that could be imagined. There I saw the empress and the young princes, in their several lodgings, with their chief attendants about them.

My next adventure in Lilliput was a more extraordinary one. The nation was threatened with an invasion from the island of Blefuscu, which is the other great empire of those parts and an enemy to Lilliput. The emperor secretly sent his secretary of state to entreat my help against the invaders; to which I replied "that I was ready, with the hazard of my life, to defend his person and state against all invaders."

The empire of Blefuscu is an island situated to the north-east of Lilliput, from which it is parted only by a channel of eight hundred feet wide. I communicated to his majesty a project I had formed of seizing the enemy's whole fleet, which, as our scouts assured us, lay at anchor in the harbour, ready to sail upon us with the first fair wind. I consulted the most experienced seamen upon the depth of the channel, and they told me that in the middle, at high water, it was seventy *glumgluffs* deep, which is about six feet of European measure; and the rest of it fifty *glumgluffs* at the most. The fleet of Blefuscu consisted of about fifty men-of-war, and a great number of transports.

I gave orders for a great quantity of the strongest cable and bars of iron. The cable was about as thick as packthread and the bars of the length and size of a knitting-needle. I trebled the cable to make it stronger, and for the same reason I twisted three of the iron bars together, bending the ends into a hook. Having thus fixed fifty hooks to as many cables, I went to the north-east coast, and putting off my coat, shoes and stockings, walked into the sea, in my leathern jerkin, about half an hour before high water. I waded with what haste I could, and swam in the middle about thirty yards, till I felt ground. I arrived at the fleet in less than half an hour.

The enemy were so frightened when they saw me that they leaped out of their ships and swam to shore, where there could not be fewer than thirty thousand souls; I then took my tackling, and fastening a hook to the hole at the prow of each, I tied all the cords together at the end. While I was thus employed, the enemy discharged several thousand arrows, many of which stuck in my hands and face; and, besides the excessive smart, gave me much disturbance in my work.

My greatest apprehension was for mine eyes, which I should have infallibly lost if I had not suddenly thought of an expedient. I kept, among other little necessaries, a pair of spectacles, in a private pocket which, as I observed before, had escaped the emperor's searchers. These I took out, and fastened as strongly as I could upon my nose, and thus armed, went on boldly with my work, in spite of the enemy's arrows, many of which struck against the glasses of my spectacles, but without any other effect than a little to discompose them.

I had now fastened all the hooks, and taking the knot in my hand, began to pull; but not a ship would stir, for they were all too fast held by their anchors; so that the boldest part of my enterprise remained. I therefore let go the cord; and leaving the hooks fixed to the ships, I resolutely cut with my knife the cables that fastened the anchors, receiving about two hundred shots in my face and hands; then I took up the knotted end of the cables, to which my hooks were tied, and with the greatest ease drew fifty of the enemy's largest men-of-war after me.

The Blefuscudians, who had not the least imagination of what I intended, were at first confounded with astonishment. They had seen me cut the cables, and thought my design was only to let the ships run adrift, or fall foul of

each other; but when they perceived the whole fleet moving in order, and saw me pulling at the end, they set up such a scream of grief and despair as it is almost impossible to describe or conceive.

When I had got out of danger, I stopped awhile to pick out the arrows that stuck in my hands and face; and rubbed on some of the same ointment that was given me on my first arrival, as I have formerly mentioned. I then took off my spectacles, and waiting about an hour, till the tide was a little fallen, I waded through the middle with my cargo, and arrived safe at the royal port of Lilliput.

The emperor and his whole court stood on the shore, expecting the issue of this great adventure. They saw the ships move forward in a large half-moon, but could not discern me, who was up to my breast in water. When I advanced to the middle of the channel, they were yet in pain, because I was under water to my neck.

The emperor concluded me to be drowned and that the enemy's fleet was approaching in a hostile manner; but he was soon eased of his fears; for the channel growing shallower every step I made, I came in a short time within hearing, and holding up the end of the cable, by which the fleet was fastened, I cried in a loud voice, "Long live the most puissant King of Lilliput!" This great prince received me at my landing with all possible encomiums, and created me a *nardac* upon the spot, which is the highest title of honour among them.

His majesty desired that I would take some other opportunity of bringing ruin to Blefuscu; but having now captured all their fleet and so ended the war, I plainly protested "that I would never be an instrument of bringing a free and brave people into slavery," which was what his majesty intended. When the Blefuscudians came to seek peace I was of advantage to them in getting them better terms than they would have had without me; and for this and my refusal to destroy them further the emperor of Lilliput never forgave me.

But they of Blefuscu were much my friends, and brought me an honourable invitation from their king, that I would pay a visit to Blefuscu. For this I sought the permission of our emperor to do so, and he granted it, but in a very cold manner.

GULLIVER'S VISIT TO BLEFUSCU

A LITTLE later, hearing privately that I was out of favour at court and was to be seized and have my eyes put out, I determined to leave for Blefuscu, and went to that side of the island where our fleet lay. I seized a large man-of-war, and tied the cable to the prow; and, lifting up the anchors, I stripped myself, put my clothes (together with my coverlet, which I carried under my arm) into the vessel, and drawing it after me, between wading and swimming arrived at the royal port of Blefuscu, where the people expected me. They lent me two guides to direct me to the capital city, and I held them in my hands till I came within two hundred yards of the gate, where the emperor and his train met me.

I shall not trouble the reader with the particular account of my reception at this court, which was suitable to the generosity of so great a prince; nor of the difficulties I was in for want of a house and bed, being forced to lie on the ground, wrapped up in my coverlet.

Three days after my arrival, walking, out of curiosity, to the north-east coast of the island, I observed, about half a league off in the sea, somewhat that looked like a boat overturned. I pulled off my shoes and stockings, and, wading two or three hundred yards, I found the object to approach nearer by force of the tide; and then plainly saw it to be a real boat, which I supposed might by some tempest have been driven from a ship: whereupon I returned immediately towards the city, and desired his imperial majesty to lend me twenty of the tallest vessels he had left, after the loss of his fleet, and three thousand seamen, under the command of his vice-admiral.

This fleet sailed round while I went back the shortest way to the coast, where I first discovered the boat. I found the tide had driven it still nearer. The seamen were all provided with cordage, which I had beforehand twisted to a sufficient strength. When the ships came up, I stripped myself, and waded till I came within a hundred yards of the boat, after which I was forced to swim till I got up to it. The seamen threw me the end of the cord, which I fastened to a hole in the forepart of the boat, and the other end to a man-of-war; but I found all my labour to little purpose; for, being out of my depth, I was not able to work.

In this necessity I was forced to swim behind, and push the boat forward, as often as I could, with one of my hands; and the tide favouring me, I advanced so far that I could just hold up my chin and feel the ground. I rested two or three minutes, and then gave the boat another shove, and so on, till the sea was no higher then my armpits; and now the most laborious part being over I took out my other cables, which were stowed in one of the ships, and fastened them first to the boat, and then to nine of the vessels which attended me; the wind being favourable, the seamen towed, and I shoved, until we arrived within forty yards of the shore, and waiting till the tide was out, I got dry to the boat; and by the assistance of two thousand men, with ropes and engines, made a shift to turn it on its bottom, and found it was but little damaged.

I shall not trouble the reader with the difficulties I was under, by the help of certain paddles, which cost me ten days making, to get my boat into the royal port of Blefuscu, where a mighty concourse of people appeared upon my arrival full of wonder at the sight of so prodigious a vessel. I told the emperor "that my good fortune had thrown this boat in my way, to carry me to some place whence I might

return to my native country; and begged his majesty's orders for getting materials to fit it up, together with his licence to depart"; which, after some kind expostulations, he was pleased to grant.

HOMEWARD BOUND

By the consideration of the emperor, five hundred workmen were employed to make two sails to my boat according to my directions, by quilting thirteen folds of their strongest linen together. I was at the pains of making ropes and cables, by twisting ten, twenty, or thirty of the thickest and strongest of theirs. A great stone that I happened to find, after a long search, by the sea-shore, served me for an anchor. I had the tallow of three hundred cows for greasing my boat and other uses. I was at incredible pains in cutting down some of the largest timber-trees for oars and masts, wherein I was, however, much assisted by his majesty's ship-carpenters, who helped me in smoothing them after I had done the rough work.

In about a month, when all was prepared, I took my leave. His majesty presented me with fifty purses of two hundred coins apiece, together with his picture at full length, which I put immediately into one of my gloves, to keep it from being hurt.

I stored the boat with the carcases of a hundred oxen and three hundred sheep, with bread and drink proportionable, and as much meat ready dressed as four hundred cooks could provide; I took with me six cows and two bulls alive, with as many ewes and rams to carry back to England; and to feed them on board, ample hay and corn. I would gladly have taken a dozen of the natives, but this was a thing the emperor would by no means permit.

I set sail on the 24th day of September, 1701; and when I had gone about four leagues to the northward, in the evening I descried a small island, where I cast anchor and passed the night. I ate my breakfast before the sun was up, and heaving anchor, steered the same course that I had done the day before, wherein I was directed by my pocket compass. On the next day, about three in the afternoon, when I had by my computation made twenty-four leagues from Blefuscu, I descried a sail steering to the south-east; my course was due east. I hailed her, but could get no answer; yet I found that I gained upon her, for the wind slackened. I made all the sail I could, and in half an hour she spied me, then hung out her ancient, and discharged a gun.

It is not easy to express the joy I was in, upon the unexpected hope of once more seeing my beloved country and the dear pledges I left in it. The ship slackened her sails, and I came up with her between five and six in the evening, September 26th; but my heart leaped within me to see her English colours. I put my cows and sheep into my coat pocket, and got on board with all my little cargo of provisions.

The vessel was an English merchantman, returning from Japan by the North and South Seas; the captain, Mr. John Biddle, of Deptford, a very civil man, and an excellent sailor. We were now in the latitude 30 degrees south; there were about fifty men in the ship; and here I met an old comrade of mine, one Peter Williams, who gave me a good character to the captain.

This gentleman treated me with kindness, and desired I would let him know what place I came from last, and whither I was bound; which I did in a few words, but he thought I was raving, and that the dangers I had undergone had disturbed my head; whereupon I took my black cattle and sheep out of my pocket, which, after great astonishment, clearly convinced him of my veracity. I then showed him the gold given me by the emperor of Blefuscu, together with his majesty's picture at full length, and some other rarities of that country.

I shall not trouble the reader with a particular account of this voyage, which was very prosperous for the most part. We arrived in the Downs on the 13th of April, 1702. I had only one misfortune, that the rats on board carried away one of my sheep; I found her bones in a hole, picked clean from the flesh. The rest of my cattle I got safe ashore, and set them a-grazing in a bowling-green at Greenwich, where the fineness of the grass made them feed very heartily, though I had always feared the contrary; neither could I possibly have preserved them in so long a voyage, if the captain had not allowed me some of his best biscuit, which, rubbed to powder and mingled with water, was their constant food.

The short time I continued in England, I made a considerable profit by showing my cattle to many persons of quality and others; and before I began my second voyage I sold them for six hundred pounds.

I stayed but two months with my wife and family, for my insatiable desire of seeing foreign countries would suffer me to continue no longer. I left fifteen hundred pounds with my wife, and fixed her in a good house at Redriff. My remaining stock I carried with me, part in money and part in goods, in hopes to improve my fortunes. My eldest uncle, John, had left me an estate in land, near Epping, of about thirty pounds a year; and I had a long lease of the "Black Ball" in Fetter Lane, which yielded me as much more; so that I was not in any danger of leaving my family upon the parish.

I took leave of my wife, and boy and girl, with tears on both sides, and went on board the *Adventure*, a merchant-ship of three hundred tons, bound for Surat; Captain John Nicholas, of Liverpool, commander. But my account of this voyage must be referred to the second part of my travels.

This second voyage of Gulliver's took him to the land of the Brobdingnags, who were as huge as the Lilliputians were small. His adventures there are given in the complete book "Gulliver's Travels," and are splendid reading.

Monday's child is fair of face
Tuesday's child is full of grace
Wednesday's child is full of woe
Thursday's child has far to go
Friday's child is loving & giving
Saturday's child works hard for her living
But the child that is born on the Sabbath Day
Is bonny & blithe & good & gay.

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The Nursery Soap

6d. per Tablet
Box of 3 Tablets 1/6
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"Oh, Cook!—

they will be here in 30 minutes, and I was not expecting anybody."

There is no work and no waiting with Bird's Custard, and, because Bird's is so quickly made, you can deal with any meal-time emergency. Always keep a tin at hand.

BIRD'S CUSTARD

can make a meal in a moment, and always makes it nourishing.

With tinned, bottled, or stewed fresh fruit, that ever-welcome dish Bird's Custard and fruit, can be provided instantly. Yet there is nothing hasty-looking about it! The very sight of Bird's Custard and fruit, a picture in green and gold, or scarlet and gold, whets the appetite.

Helpful Hints:—Have to-day Bird's Custard with fruit—tinned, bottled or freshly stewed. Then, next time you have a pudding, serve it with Bird's Custard as hot sauce; *BIRD'S* will treble the enjoyment, and double the nutriment.

C.1536